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THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Of the late REVEREND and LEARNED

CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the Univerſity of *Cambridge.*

In FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,
Printed for R. MANBY in the *Old Bailey*, near
Ludgate-hill; and H. S. Cox in *Pater-noſter Row.*
MDCCLV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reputation of Dr. *Middleton's* Writings is ſo well eſtabliſhed in the World, that nothing needs be ſaid in Favour of the preſent Collection of them into one Body, eſpecially as many of them were ſo ſcarce, that they could not be procured without great Difficulty. It were to be wiſhed, that he had purſued and compleated the Deſign, which he had formed, of compoſing an exact Hiſtory of his Works, with the Occaſions and Circumſtances of them: in defect of which we can only ſubjoin a Catalogue of them, in the Order in which they were printed, after having premiſed a few Particulars concerning his Life, additional to thoſe pointed out by the Index under his Name.

HE was Son of a Clergyman in *Yorkſhire*, poſſeſſed of an eaſy Fortune, beſides his Preferment in the Church; and was born at *Richmond*, in that County, on the 27th of *December*, 1683. At ſeventeen Years of Age he was ſent to *Trinity College* in *Cambridge*, of which he afterwards was Fellow; quitting it upon his Marriage, when he was twenty-ſeven Years old, with

ADVERTISEMENT.

Mrs. *Drake*, Daughter of Mr. *Morris*, of *Oak-Morris* in *Kent*, and Widow of Counſellor *Drake* of *Cambridge*, a Lady of ample Fortune. After his Marriage he took a Living, in the Gift of his Wife, but reſigned it in about a Year.

His chief Reſidence for the reſt of his Life was at *Cambridge*, of which Univerſity he was choſen principal Library-Keeper, and held that Place till his Death. After the Deceaſe of his firſt Wife, he travelled through *France* into *Italy*, and was at *Rome* in 1724. In *December* 1731 he was appointed Woodwardian Profeſſor; which Poſt he ſurrendered in 1734, and ſoon after married *Mary*, Daughter of the Rev. Mr. *Conyers Place*, of *Dorcheſter*; and upon her Death, his third Wife, *Anne*, the Daughter of *John Powell*, Eſq; of *Boughroyd*, in the County of *Radnor*, in *North Wales*. He accepted a Living from Sir *John Frederick*, Bart. not long before his Death, which was occaſioned by a ſlow hectic Fever, and Diſorder in his Liver, on the 28th of *July* 1750, in the 67th Year of his Age, at *Hilderſham* in *Cambridgeſhire*, an Eſtate of his own purchaſing.

A CATA

A CATALOGUE
OF
Dr. MIDDLETON's WORKS,
In the Order in which they were publiſhed;

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not, as is commonly believed, by a foreign
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De Latinarum Literarum Pronunciatione Diſſertatio.

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A

FREE INQUIRY

INTO THE

MIRACULOUS POWERS

Which are ſuppoſed to have ſubſiſted in the

CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

From the EARLIEST AGES through ſeveral
ſucceſſive CENTURIES.

By which it is ſhewn,

That we have no ſufficient Reaſon to believe, upon
the Authority of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS,

That any ſuch Powers were continued to the CHURCH,
after the Days of the APOSTLES.

PRÆFACE.

WHEN I firſt ſent abroad my *Introductory Diſcourſe*, this larger work, which I then promiſed, and now offer to the public, was actually prepared, and intended to have been publiſhed at the ſame time and in the ſame form, in which it now appears, with that Diſcourſe prefixed to it. But when I recollected the great importance of the ſubject, which had never before been profeſſedly examined; and that the part eſpecially, which I had undertaken to defend, was not onely new, but contradictory to the general opinion, which prevails among Chriſtians; and above all, that I had nothing to truſt to in the management of it, but my own private judgement; I began to think it a duty, which candor and prudence preſcribed, not to alarm the public at once with an argument ſo ſtrange and ſo little underſtood; nor to hazard an experiment ſo big with conſequences, till I had firſt given out ſome ſketch or general plan of what I was projecting; ſo that all, who were diſpoſed to examine it, might have notice and leiſure, to inquire into the grounds of it, and qualify themſelves to form a proper judgment of that evidence, which I might afterwards produce in its defence. I was in hopes alſo, by this method, of reaping ſome benefit to myſelf, from the opportunity, which it would give, not onely of drawing out other people's ſentiments, but, if any juſt cauſe ſhould be offered, of changing even my own; while I kept it ſtill in my power, either to drop the purſuit of my ſcheme, or to reform it, in ſuch a manner, as any new light or better information might happen to direct me.

This was my view, in publiſhing a ſeparate edition of the *Introductory Diſcourſe:* which, as I eaſily foreſaw, was ſure to encounter all the oppoſition, that prejudice, bigottry, and ſuperſtition, are ever prepared to give to all free inquiries into opinions, which depend on the prevalence of their power. I was aware, that the very novelty of it would offend, and the matter of it ſtill more: that many would riſe up againſt it, and ſome of them by writing, others, by noiſe and clamor, try to raiſe a popular odium upon it; but my comfort was, that this would excite the candid inquirers alſo, to take it into their conſideration, and to weigh the merit and conſequences of it; and it was the judgement of theſe alone, by which I propoſed to determine my future meaſures and reſolution with regard to it.

The event has anſwered, not onely to my expectation, but to my wiſhes: for notwithſtanding all, which has been publiſhed againſt it, from the Preſs, the Pulpit, and the Theological Schools; the general approbation, which it has every where received from thoſe, whoſe authority I chiefly value, has given me the utmoſt encouragement to perſevere in the proſecution of my argument, as being of the greateſt importance to the Proteſtant religion, and the ſole expedient which can effectually ſecure it, from being gradually undermined, and finally ſubverted by the efforts of *Rome*.

But beſides the favorable reception, which it has met with both among the Clergy and the Layety, it was an unexpected ſatisfaction to me, to be informed lately by a friend, that Mr. *Locke* had many years ago declared the ſame opinion with mine, concerning *the miracles of the Primitive Church*, in a paragraph of his *third Letter on Toleration*; which I had never read or ſeen, but ſhall now offer to the reader in his own words; being perſuaded, that the authority of ſo eminent a writer, and ſo ſingularly qualified, by his talents and ſtudies, to diſcern the exact relations and conſequences of things, will add great weight and confirmation to the cauſe, which I am here defending.

" And ſo I leave you," ſays Mr. *Locke* to his Antagoniſt, " to diſpoſe of the credit of Eccle-
" ſiaſtical writers, as you ſhall think fit, and by
" your authority, to eſtabliſh or invalidate
" theirs, as you pleaſe. But this, I think, is

" evident, that he, who will build his faith or " reaſonings upon miracles delivered by Church " Hiſtorians, *will find cauſe to go farther than the* " *Apoſtles time, or elſe, not to ſtop at* Conſtantin's; " ſince the writers after that period, whoſe word " we take, as unqueſtionable in other things, " ſpeak of miracles in their time with no leſs " aſſurance, than the Fathers before the fourth " century: and a great part of the miracles of " the ſecond and third centuries ſtand upon the " credit of the writers of the fourth. So that, " that ſort of argument, which takes and rejects " the teſtimony of the ancients at pleaſure, as it " may beſt ſuit with it, will not have much " force with thoſe, who are not diſpoſed to em- " brace the hypotheſis, without any arguments " at all [1]."

As to the writers, who have hitherto declared themſelves againſt this opinion, ſignified here in ſhort by Mr. *Locke*, and explaned at large by myſelf, they have ſhewn a great eagerneſs indeed, to diſtinguiſh their zeal, but a very little knowledge of the quæſtion, which they have undertaken to diſcuſs; urged by the hopes of thoſe honors, which they have ſeen others acquire, by former attacks upon me; and, like true ſoldiers of the militant Church, prepared to fight for every eſtabliſhment, that offers ſuch pay and rewards to its defenders. Who, from a blind deference to authority, think the credibility of a witneſs ſufficient to evince the certainty of all facts indifferently, whether natural or ſupernatural, probable or improbable; and knowing no diſtinction between faith and credulity, take a facility of believing, to be the ſureſt mark of a ſound Chriſtian. Their arguments are conformable to their principles: for inſtead of entring into the merits of the cauſe, and ſhewing my opinion to be falſe or contradictory to any truth ſubſiſting in the world, they think it a full confutation of it, to prove it contrary to the belief of the primitive ages, to the teſtimony of the ancient Fathers, and to the tradition of the Catholic Church: by the help of which venerable names, they inſinuate fears and jealouſies, of I know not what conſequences, dangerous to Chriſtianity, ruinous to the faith of Hiſtory, and introductive of an univerſal Scepticiſm. Terrors purely imaginary; grounded on error and prejudice; which, if ſuffered to prevail, would produce conſequences much more to be dreaded; ſubverſive of all true Religion, as well as of every thing elſe, that is rational and virtuous among men. But after all their invectives, it is a pleaſure to find them obliged, in the courſe of the debate, to confute their own clamors; and to declare at laſt with me, that, whatever be the fate of my argument, or were it allowed even to be true, the credit of the Goſpel-miracles could not in any degree be ſhaken by it [1].

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[1] See Let. 3d, on Tolerat. c. x. p. 269.

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[1] See Remarks on two Pamphlets againſt the Introd. Diſc. p. 8, 9.

But to ſpeak my mind freely on the ſubject of conſequences. I am not ſo ſcrupulous perhaps in my regard to them, as many of my profeſſion are apt to be: my nature is frank and open, and warmly diſpoſed, not onely to ſeek, but to ſpeak what I take to be true, which diſpoſition has been greatly confirmed by the ſituation, into which Providence has thrown me. For I was never trained to pace in the trammels of the Church, nor tempted by the ſweets of its preferments, to ſacrifice the philoſophic freedom of a ſtudious, to the ſervile reſtraints of an ambitious life: and from this very circumſtance, as often as I reflect upon it, I feel that comfort in my own breaſt, which no external honors can beſtow. I perſuade myſelf, that the life and faculties of man, at the beſt but ſhort and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or laudably, than in the ſearch of knowledge; and eſpecially of that ſort, which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happineſs. In theſe Inquiries therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me; I readily purſue, and endeavour to trace it to its ſource; without any reſerve or caution of puſhing the diſcovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the diſcovery of any thing which is true, as a valuable acquiſition to ſociety; which cannot poſſibly hurt, or obſtruct the good effect of any other truth whatſoever: for they all partake of one common eſſence, and neceſſarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain, which fall ſeparately into the river, mix themſelves at once with the ſtream, and ſtrengthen the general current.

The light of truth indeed is ſure to expoſe the vanity of all thoſe popular ſyſtems and prejudices, which are to be found in every country; derived originally from error, fraud, or ſuperſtition; and craftily impoſed upon the many, to ſerve the intereſts of a few. Hence it is, that upon the detection of any of theſe, and eſpecially of the religious kind, we ſee all that rage of fierce Bigots, hypocritical Zealots, and intereſted Politicans; and of all whoſe credit or fortunes in any manner depend on the eſtabliſhment of error and ignorance among men: and hence, all thoſe horrible maſſacres and perſecutions, of which we frequently read, both in Pagan and Chriſtian Countries, which, under the pretext of ſerving God, have deſtroyed ſo many thouſands of his beſt ſervants. But truth was never known to be on the perſecuting ſide, or to have had any other effect, than to promote the general good, and to co-operate with Heaven itſelf, in bringing us ſtill nearer to the perfection of our being, and to the knowledge of that eternal rule of good and ill, which God originally marked out and preſcribed to the nature of man. Let the conſequences then of truth reach as far as they can; the farther they reach the better; the more errors they will detect, and the more they will diſſipate of thoſe clouds and miſts, in which the crafty and intereſted part of mankind are apt to involve and diſguiſe the real nature of things, from the view of their fellow creatures.

The preſent quæſtion, concerning the reality of the miraculous powers of the primitive Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by thoſe powers, and of the witneſſes, who atteſt them. If either part be infirm, their credit muſt ſink in proportion; and if the facts eſpecially be incredible, muſt of courſe fall to the ground: becauſe no force of teſtimony can alter the nature of things. The credibility of facts lies open to the trial of our reaſon and ſenſes, but the credibility of witneſſes depends on a variety of principles, wholly conceled from us; and tho', in many caſes, it may reaſonably be preſumed, yet in none, can it certainly be known. For it is common with men, out of crafty and ſelfiſh views, to diſſemble and deceive; or, out of weakneſs and credulity, to embrace and defend with zeal, what the craft of others had impoſed upon them: but plain facts cannot delude us; cannot ſpeak any other language, or give any other information, but what flows from nature and truth. The teſtimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our ſenſes, in this wonderful fabric and conſtitution of worldly things, may properly be called the teſtimony of God himſelf; as it carries with it the ſureſt inſtruction in all caſes;

and

and to all nations, which in the ordinary courſe of his providence he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life.

But before we procede to examine the particular facts and teſtimonies, which antiquity has furniſhed for the deciſion of this diſpute, our firſt care ſhould be, to inform ourſelves of the proper nature and condition of thoſe miraculous powers, which are the ſubject of it, as they are repreſented to us in the hiſtory of the Goſpel; for till we have learnt from thoſe ſacred records, what they really were, for what purpoſes granted, and in what manner exerted by the Apoſtles and firſt poſſeſſors of them, we cannot form a proper judgement on thoſe evidences, which are brought either to confirm or confute their continuance in the Church, and muſt diſpute conſequently at random, as chance or prejudice may prompt us, about things unknown to us.

And this indeed appears to be the caſe of all theſe zealous Champions, who have attempted to refute the *Introductory Diſcourſe*. Among whom, I have not obſerved one, who ſeems to have ſpent a thought, in conſidering the origin and uſe of thoſe powers, as they are ſet forth in the New Teſtament. They appeal indeed to the Text, in which they were promiſed by our Lord to his Diſciples: where tho' there is not the leaſt hint of any particular time, for which they were to laſt, yet this they ſupply from their own imagination,

nation, and by the help of a poſtulatum, which all people will grant, *that they continued as long, as they were neceſſary to the Church*, they preſently extend that neceſſity to what length they pleaſe, or as far as they find it agreeable to the ſeveral ſyſtems, which they had previouſly entertained about them.

They urge eſpecially that paſſage from St. *Mark*, in which our Lord, juſt ready to aſcend into Heaven, and giving his laſt inſtructions to his Apoſtles, *to go and preach to all nations*, immediately adds; *And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them who believe: in my name they ſhall caſt out Devils; they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues; they ſhall take up ſerpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover* [1].

From theſe words, one of my Antagoniſts argues thus: "It will here be obſerved, that this "promiſe was not made to the Apoſtles perſonally, but to them, that ſhould believe through "their preaching, without any limitation of "time for the continuance of theſe powers to "their days. And when it is conſidered how "great a part of the Heathen world remained "unconverted after their days, it is no unreaſonable ſuppoſition, that theſe powers did not "expire with the Apoſtles, but were continued "to their Succeſſors, in the work of propagat-

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[1] Mark xvi. 17.

" ing the Goſpel. How long, I ſay not: and " perhaps there is not light enough in hiſtory, " to ſettle this point; as indeed it nothing con-" cerns us. But the earlieſt Fathers unanimouſly " affirm, that theſe powers ſubſiſted in the " Church in their days; and why they are not " to be believed, it is the Author's buſineſs to " ſhew [1]."

Another Advocate of the ſame cauſe makes the following remark on the ſame paſſage. " Our Saviour, before he left the world, pro-" miſes theſe miraculous powers not onely to " the Apoſtles, but to private Chriſtians: and " the rules and directions, which St. *Paul* after-" wards gave the *Corinthians*, concerning the " exerciſe of them, plainly ſhew, that they muſt " have continued ſome conſiderable time in the " Church. And as Chriſt's promiſe is without " any limitation of time, we may reaſonably " ſuppoſe that they laſted as long as the Church " had an immediate occaſion for them, ſuch as " the farther converſion of the world."—For which purpoſe of converting thoſe nations, who had not as yet heard of the Goſpel, he declares it, " to be neceſſary, that the Succeſſors of the " Apoſtles ſhould be indued with miraculous " powers, eſpecially with *the gift of tongues*, " without which they could not expect any con-" ſiderable ſucceſs—and he concludes therefore, " that it is highly probable, if not abſo-

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[1] See Obſervat. on the Introd. Diſ. p. 25.

" lutely certain, that they did actually ſubſiſt in " the Church for ſome conſiderable time, after " the days of the Apoſtles [1]."

It being agreed then, that in the original promiſe of theſe miraculous gifts, there is no intimation of any particular period, to which their continuance was limited, the next quæſtion is, by what ſort of evidence the preciſe time of their duration is to be determined? But to this point one of the writers juſt referred to, excuſes himſelf, as we have ſeen, from giving any anſwer; and thinks it ſufficient to declare in general, that *the earlieſt Fathers unanimouſly affirm them to have continued down to their times.* Yet he has not told us, as he ought to have done, to what age he limits the character of *the earlieſt Fathers*; whether to the ſecond or to the third century, or, with the generality of our writers, means alſo to include the fourth. But to whatever age he may reſtrain it, the difficulty at laſt will be, to aſſign a reaſon, why we muſt needs ſtop there. In the mean while, by his appealing thus to the *earlieſt Fathers* onely, as unanimous on this article, a common reader would be apt to infer, that the later Fathers are more cold or diffident, or divided upon it; whereas the reverſe of this is true, and the more we deſcend from thoſe earlieſt Fathers, the more ſtrong and explicit we find their Succeſſors, in atteſting the perpetual ſucceſſion and daily exertion of the ſame miraculous powers, in their ſeveral ages: ſo that if the cauſe muſt be determined by *the unanimous conſent of Fathers*, we ſhall find as much reaſon to believe, that thoſe powers were continued even to the lateſt ages, as to any other, how early and primitive ſoever, after the days of the Apoſtles.

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[1] See Poſtſcript of a Treatiſe on Mirac. by Abr. Lemoine, p. 511, 512, 515.

But the ſame writer gives us two reaſons, why he does not chuſe to ſay any thing upon the ſubject of their duration: 1ſt, becauſe, *there is not light enough in hiſtory, to ſettle it*: 2dly, becauſe *the thing itſelf is of no concern to us.*

As to his firſt reaſon, I am at a loſs to conceive, what farther light a profeſſed Advocate of the primitive ages and Fathers can poſſibly require in this caſe. For as far as the Church-Hiſtorians can illuſtrate or throw light upon any thing, there is not a ſingle point in all hiſtory, ſo conſtantly, explicitely, and unanimouſly affirmed by them all, as the continual ſucceſſion of theſe powers through all ages, from the earlieſt Father, who firſt mentions them, down to the time of the Reformation. Which ſame ſucceſſion is ſtill farther deduced, by perſons of the moſt eminent character, for their probity, learning, and dignity in the *Romiſh* Church, to this very day. So that the onely doubt, which can remain with us, is; whether the Church-Hiſtorians are to be truſted or not: for if any credit be due to them in the preſent caſe, it muſt reach either to all, or to none: becauſe the reaſon of believing them in any one age, will be found to be of equal force in all, as far as it depends on the characters of the perſons atteſting, or the nature of the things atteſted.

The ſecond reaſon is ſtill more; *that the point of their duration is of no concern to us.* This indeed is ſtrange, from a writer of his principles; for if primitive antiquity, as all theſe champions contend, is to be the rule, of regulating the doctrines and diſcipline of all modern Churches, it muſt ſurely be of the utmoſt concern to us to know, how far it's authority may be truſted, and how far the hand of God continued to co-operate viſibly with the ſaints of thoſe ages, by giving a divine ſanction to the doctrines, which they taught, and the rites, which they eſtabliſhed. For that God did actually exert himſelf in ſuch an extraordinary manner, in thoſe primitive days, this writer affirms from the unanimous teſtimony of *the earlieſt Fathers*; yet owns withal, that the ſame ages were impoſed upon alſo by falſe and fictitious pretenſions to miraculous powers. As far therefore, as it is our duty, to conform ourſelves to the doctrines and uſages of thoſe early ages, ſo far it muſt be of great importance, to have a rule of diſtinguiſhing the true from the falſe; of diſcerning thoſe, which God had ſtamped with his authority for the common good of mankind, from thoſe, which fraud and craft had impoſed, for the private intereſt of a few Impoſtors: towards which, nothing could afford more light and help to us, than to know the preciſe duration of true miracles, and to be able to pronounce, that they proceded thus far and no farther. On my part, indeed, it might very conſiſtently be ſaid, that it is of no uſe to inquire or diſpute how long thoſe powers ſubſiſted, ſince, according to my principles, they never ſubſiſted at all, after the days of the Apoſtles: but when a writer affirms the Primitive Church to be a guide to us, and to have been indued with miraculous powers, for the confirmation of its divine authority, yet declares it of *no concern to us*, to know, how long thoſe powers continued in it, or at what time God was pleaſed to withdraw them, on account of the prevailing corruptions and forgeries of the ſame Church, he acts not onely in contradiction to his own principles, but to reaſon and common ſenſe, and betrays a great want either of judgement or ſincerity.

The argument alſo, which theſe writers alledge for the continuance of miracles, and eſpecially *of the gift of tongues, from the unconverted ſtate of the Heathen world*, is not leſs impertinent and injudicious: becauſe it might have been alledged as juſtly and with equal force, through all ages of the Church, from the Apoſtolic times down to our own; and will juſtify the Romaniſts themſelves in their pretenſions to the ſame powers at this very day: ſince the greateſt part of this habitable Globe remains ſtill in the ſame *unconverted ſtate*; immerſed in groſs idolatry; without any knowledge of the true God, or light of the Goſpel among them.

But in truth, this ſame conſideration, *of the unconverted ſtate of the Heathens*, was thought to have ſo much weight in it by *Grotius*, as to perſuade him, from a parity, both of reaſon, and of evidence alſo, which was found in every age, that theſe extraordinary gifts were certainly continued to the later, as well as to the earlier times of the Church. Nay, he took the converſion of the Heathens, to be an occaſion ſo worthy of the divine interpoſition, as not to doubt, he ſays, but, that *if any perſon were employed in it at this day, in a manner agreeable to the will of our Lord, he would find himſelf indued with a power of working miracles* [1]. From which declaration of, ſo learned and judicious a Critic, we may obſerve in the firſt place, what I have elſewhere frequently ſignified; how naturally the allowance of thoſe powers to the earlier ages, will engage us, if we are conſiſtent with ourſelves, to allow the ſame alſo to the later ages: and, in the ſecond place, how fallacious the judgement even of the wiſeſt will ever be found, when deſerting the path of nature and experience, and giving the reins to fancy and conjecture, they attempt to illuſtrate the ſecret counſels of Providence.

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[1] Cum vero multo etiam ſeriora ſecula plena ſint teſtimoniis ejus rei, neſcio qua ratione moti quidam id donum ad prima tantum tempora reſtringant: —— Quare ſiquis nunc etiam Gentibus Chriſti ignaris — Chriſtum, ita ut ipſe annunciari voluit, annunciet, promiſſionis vim duraturam non dubito. In Marc. xvi. 17.

For experience has long taught us, that tho' all the different Churches and Sects of Chriſtians, have ſent abroad their ſeveral Miſſionaries, to propagate the Goſpel among the remote and Idolatrous nations, yet none of them have ever been inabled to work a ſingle miracle in confirmation of their miſſion. The Romaniſts indeed make a pretenſion to ſuch a power, and boaſt of ſeveral miracles performed by their Miſſionaries in both the *Indies:* yet, as I have elſewhere obſerved, one of their graveſt writers has openly acknowledged the vanity of ſuch Pretenſions; and one of their moſt eminent wonder-workers, St. *Francis Xavier*, called the *Apoſtle of the Indies*, laments, in ſome of his letters, "that "through his ignorance of the language of "thoſe nations, he found himſelf incapable of "doing any ſervice to the Chriſtian cauſe, and "was but little better than a mute Statue "among them, till he could acquire ſome competent knowledge of it: for which purpoſe, "he was forced to act the boy again, and apply "himſelf to the taſk of learning the rudiments "of it [1]."

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[1] See Præf. Diſc. to my Letter from *Rome*.

Now this *gift of tongues* is what the adverſaries of my ſcheme lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon. They declare it to be ſo peculiarly neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, that no conſiderable ſucceſs could be expected without it; and from this neceſſity infer the certainty of its continuance after the days of the Apoſtles. But they will have the mortification to find, in the ſequel of this work, their imaginary hypotheſis effectually confuted by the evidence of real fact; and this very gift, of whoſe continuance they are ſo aſſured, to have been of all others, the moſt evidently and confeſſedly withdrawn, in the earlieſt ages of the Church. They will find, I ſay, that the ſingle Father, who lays any claim to it, and one of the graveſt and moſt venerable of them all, laments, like the *Romiſh Apoſtle of the* Indies, *his own want of it, in the work of propagating the Goſpel among a rude and barbarous people:* and that, in all the ſucceding ages, while all the other kinds of miraculous gifts are frequently celebrated, and affirmed to floriſh ſtill in great abundance, there is not a ſingle inſtance to be met with of this, nor the leaſt pretenſion made to it by any writer whatſoever.

From this fact, and many more of the ſame ſort, which might be produced, the reader will obſerve, how raſh and preſumptuous it is, to form arguments ſo peremptorily upon the ſuppoſed neceſſity or propriety of a divine interpoſition,

ſition, in this or that particular caſe; and to decide upon the views and motives of the Deity, by the narrow conceptions of human reaſon. Whereas the whole, which the wit of man can poſſibly diſcover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, muſt be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourſelves, what may be proper or improper for him to do; but by looking abroad, and contemplating, what he has actually done; and attending ſeriouſly to that revelation, which he made of himſelf from the beginning, and placed continually before our eyes, in the wonderful works, and beautiful fabric of this viſible world.

There is another miſtake, which is common to all theſe advocates of the primitive miracles, and the chief ſource of their prejudices againſt *the Introductory Diſcourſe*; in taking it for granted, as they all do, that theſe miraculous powers, when they had once been conferred by our Lord, upon any of his Diſciples, were ever after perpetually inherent in them, and ready to be exerted at their will and pleaſure: whereas it is evident, from ſeveral inſtances, both of the collation and exerciſe of them, which we find in the New Teſtament, that they were merely temporary and occaſional; adapted to particular exigencies, thought worthy of them by our Lord; and imparted onely at the moment of their exertion, which, by ſome ſpecial impulſe, was notified at the ſame time to the agent; and as ſoon as thoſe particular occaſions were ſerved, that they were withdrawn again or ſuſpended, and the Agents reduced to the condition of all other men, and left to the guidance of their own natural prudence.

This, I ſay, is evident, from the account of theſe gifts and the effects of them, which is given to us in the Goſpel; as it has been obſerved alſo and declared by ſome of the beſt Expoſitors. Thus *Grotius*, in his comment on our Lord's promiſe of them to all true believers, remarks; *that theſe wonderful faculties were ſeverally diſtributed to each faithful Diſciple; yet not ſo, as to be exerted of themſelves, or at pleaſure, but reſerved to ſpecial occaſions* [1.] And the ſame thing is ſignified by our Lord himſelf, in his firſt promiſe of them to his Apoſtles, when he ſent them out, *two by two, to preach his Goſpel to the* Jews*:* on which occaſion he tells them, *that when they were brought before Governors and Kings, they ſhould not take any thought, about what they were to ſay for themſelves, for it would be given to them, in that very hour, what they ſhould ſpeak* [2]. And that it was not peculiar to the gift of language or tongues onely, to be given at the moment of it's exertion, but common likewiſe to all the reſt, will be ſhewn, probably, on ſome other occaſion,

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[1] Non omnibus omnia, —ita tamen cuilibet, ut oportet, credenti aliqua tunc data ſit admirabilis facultas, quæ ſe non ſemper quidem, ſed data occaſione explicaret. In Mar. xvi. 17.

[2] Mar. x. 19.

more at large in a particular treatiſe, which is already prepared by me, on that ſubject.

As this then was the ſtate of thoſe extraordinary powers, with which our Lord thought fit, to arm his Apoſtles, againſt the firſt ſtruggles and difficulties of their miſſion; ſo in his more intimate converſations with them, we find him frequently inculcating as an eſſential qualification alſo for the ſame miſſion, the practice of all thoſe moral virtues, which are peculiarly adapted to conciliate the favor and good will of men: a general benevolence, modeſty, affability, gentleneſs of behaviour, with great circumſpection and caution of giving offence. *Behold*, ſays he, *I ſend ye forth as ſheep, in the midſt of wolves: be ye wiſe therefore as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves* [1]: as if he meant to admoniſh them, that they were not to be perpetually directed by divine impulſes and inſpirations, but left on many occaſions to the ordinary direction of their own natural faculties: and that their ſucceſs would depend as much on the purity of their lives, as the force of their wonderful works: and that the miraculous gifts, which were indulged to them, in this infancy of the Goſpel, were intended to draw people's attention more ſtrongly to the contemplation of their manners; and to make them reflect on the excellency of that doctrine, which produced ſuch rare fruits, and offered ſuch examples of innocence and ſanctity, for the correction of a depraved and ſinful world.

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[1] Mat. x. 16.

The writers however, of whom I am ſpeaking, prepoſſeſſed with the notion of the perpetual inherence of thoſe powers, in all, who had once been indued with them, harangue with great gayety on the folly, which they impute to me, of imagining, that they ſhould all be extinguiſhed in a moment, upon the death of the laſt of the Apoſtles. They obſerve, that St. *John* outlived all the reſt near forty years; and that ſome of the moſt eminent and gifted of the other Diſciples, who are mentioned in the Goſpel, ſurvived him alſo, and were employing themſelves, in different parts of the earth, in propagating the Goſpel, and working perpetual miracles for the converſion of Unbelievers; and it was incredible, that theſe powers, which they were exerting every hour, with ſuch ſucceſs and honor to the Chriſtian cauſe, in all the principal Cities and countries of the world, and at ſo wide a diſtance from each other, ſhould all fail them at once, and expire at that very inſtant, in which St. *John* happened to die at *Epheſus*.

But while they fancy themſelves, to be diſplaying the force of their reaſoning and eloquence, they are but expoſing their own ignorance, not onely of the nature of thoſe extraordinary powers, which are the ground of the diſpute, but of the particular quæſtion, againſt which they are diſputing. For it is no where affirmed in the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, as their way of arguing implies, that thoſe powers either vaniſhed inſtantaneouſly, upon the death of St. *John*; or ſubſiſted even ſo long, as St. *John* remained alive: but the ſingle point in diſpute, as far as it ariſes from that Diſcourſe, is, whether we have ſufficient ground to believe, upon the teſtimony of the ancient Fathers, that they ſubſiſted at all, after the days of the Apoſtles.

If the nature then of theſe powers be ſuch, as I have ſignified above, and ſhall endeavour hereafter to demonſtrate; and if what I am now diſputing with regard to the ſame powers, ſhould appear alſo to be true; ſome perhaps may be apt to demand, what it is, that we are to judge at laſt, concerning their real duration; and to what period we may reaſonably venture to reſtrain them. And tho' ſuch a demand be rather curious than pertinent, and the ſolution of it of no conſequence to the point in debate; yet as we cannot help forming ſome opinion or other on all ſubjects, which have fallen under our particular obſervation, ſo I ſhall not ſcruple to declare in this, what I take to be the moſt probable, as far as I have been able to collect it, from the facts and inſtances relating to it, which are to be found in the New Teſtament: but I propoſe it only as a conjecture, which may excite others alſo, to ſearch, and to gueſs for themſelves,

ſelves, till they can hit upon ſomething more ſatisfactory. In the mean while, my opinion in ſhort is this; that in thoſe firſt efforts of planting the Goſpel, after our Lord's aſcenſion, the extraordinary gifts which he had promiſed, were poured out in the fulleſt meaſure on the Apoſtles, and thoſe other Diſciples, whom he had ordained to be the primary Inſtruments of that great work; in order to inable them, more eaſily to over-rule the inveterate prejudices both of the Jews and Gentiles, and to bear up againſt the diſcouraging ſhocks of popular rage and perſecution, which they were taught to expect in this noviciate of their miniſtry. But in proceſs of time, when they had laid a foundation, ſufficient to ſuſtain the great fabrick deſigned to be erected upon it, and, by an invincible courage, had conquered the firſt and principal difficulties; and planted Churches in all the chief Cities of the *Roman* Empire, and ſettled a regular miniſtry to ſuccede them, in the government of the ſame; it may reaſonably be preſumed, that as the benefit of miraculous powers began to be leſs and leſs wanted, in proportion to the increaſe of thoſe Churches, ſo the uſe and exerciſe of them began gradually to decline; and as ſoon as Chriſtianity had gained an eſtabliſhment in every quarter of the known world, that they were finally withdrawn, and the Goſpel left to make the reſt of its way, by its own genuin ſtrength, and the natural force of thoſe divine graces, with which it was ſo richly ſtored, *faith*, *hope*, and *charity:* graces! which never fail to inſpire all, who truly poſſeſs them, with a zeal and courage, which no terrors can daunt, nor worldly powers ſubdue. And all this, as far as I am able to judge, from the nature of the gifts themſelves, and from the inſtances or effects of them, which I have any where obſerved, may probably be thought to have happened, while ſome of the Apoſtles were ſtill living: who, in the times even of the Goſpel, appear, on ſeveral occaſions, to have been deſtitute of any extraordinary gifts: and of whoſe miracles, when we go beyond the limits of the Goſpel, we meet with nothing in the later hiſtories, on which we can depend, or nothing rather, but what is apparently fabulous. And as to St. *John* in particular, who ſurvived all the reſt, the whole, that is delivered of him with any probability, is, "that he ſpent the laſt years of his life in writ-"ing his Goſpel and Revelations, and in viſit-"ing and confirming all thoſe Churches of *Aſia*, "which had been planted by himſelf and his "brethren, and were allotted to him, as his pe-"culiar province [1]." But in the miraculous kind, the principal ſtory related of him, is *that being thrown, by the command of* Domitian, *into a caldron of boiling oil, he came out ſafe and unhurt from it:* in memory of which, a chapel was afterwards built, and is ſtill remaining, as *the Latine Gate of* Old Rome; the ſpot, where the fact is ſuppoſed to have happened; in which I ſaw the ſtory of it repreſented in painting. Yet this, with a few other trifling tales, which are recorded of the ſame Apoſtle, may juſtly be conſidered, as the fiction of the later ages.

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[1] Vid. Teſtimonia de Johanne, præfixa Evangelio ejus a Millio, in Editione N. T.

But to return once more to the ſubject of the following ſheets. The reader will find in them none of thoſe arts, which are commonly employed by diſputants, either to perplex a good cauſe, or to palliate a bad one; no ſubtil refinements, forced conſtructions, or evaſive diſtinctions; but plain reaſoning grounded on plain facts, and publiſhed with an honeſt and diſintereſted view, to free the minds of men from an inveterate impoſture, which, through a long ſucceſſion of ages, has diſgraced the religion of the Goſpel, and tyrannized over the reaſon and ſenſes of the Chriſtian world. In the purſuit of which end, I have ſhewn, by many indiſputable facts, that the ancient Fathers, by whoſe authority that deluſion was originally impoſed, and has ever ſince been ſupported, were extremely credulous and ſuperſtitious; poſſeſſed with ſtrong prejudices and an enthuſiaſtic zeal, in favor, not onely of Chriſtianity in general, but of every particular doctrine, which a wild imagination could ingraft upon it; and ſcrupling no art or means, by which they might propagate the ſame principles. In ſhort, that they were of a character, from which nothing could be expected, that was candid and impartial; nothing, but what a weak or crafty underſtanding could ſupply, towards confirming thoſe prejudices, with which they happened to be poſſeſſed; eſpecially where religion was the ſubject, which, above all other motives, ſtrengthens every biaſs, and inflames every paſſion of the human mind. And that this was actually the caſe, I have ſhewn alſo by many inſtances; in which we find them roundly affirming as true, things evidently falſe and fictitious; in order to ſtrengthen, as they fancied, the evidences of the Goſpel; or to ſerve a preſent turn of confuting an adverſary; or of inforcing a particular point which they were laboring to eſtabliſh.

The chief inſtrument, by which they acquired and maintained their credit in the world, was an appeal to *a divine and miraculous power*, as reſiding continually among them, and giving teſtimony to the truth of what they taught and practiſed. This is the particular quæſtion, which I have undertaken here to examine: and, I perſuade myſelf, that, as far as a negative can be demonſtrated, I have proved all their appeals and poſitive atteſtations to be unworthy of any credit; mere words unſupported by facts; and in many caſes directly confuted by oppoſite facts and teſtimonies. For example; among the miraculous gifts, which are expreſly clamed by the Fathers, we find theſe three; *the gift of raiſing the dead*; *of ſpeaking with tongues*; *of underſtanding the holy Scriptures.* Now, with regard to the two firſt, the moſt ſignal and important of all gifts, after weighing all the circumſtances relating to them, and all that antiquity has delivered concerning them, I find the ſtrongeſt reaſon to be convinced, that there never was a genuin inſtance of either of them, in any age, after the days of the Apoſtles: which I collect, not onely from the improbability of the things themſelves, as they are affirmed by the Fathers, but from facts alſo, which evince the contrary. And as to the third gift; it is allowed and frankly confeſſed by all, as well friends as enemies, that inſtead of a divine and infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, a moſt abſurd and ridiculous method of interpreting them, was the very characteriſtic even of the earlieſt ages.

If any one therefore ſhould be diſpoſed to anſwer or confute, what I have affirmed in this book, he muſt take a different method, from what my antagoniſts have hitherto purſued; muſt not expect, to bear down facts with ſyſtems; and from the ſuppoſed integrity and piety of the Fathers, to infer the certainty of what they atteſt: but muſt refer us to inſtances which tally with their teſtimonies, and experimentally prove the truth of them. When any of the Fathers tell us then, *that many were raiſed from the dead in their days, in every place where there was a Chriſtian Church, and lived afterwards ſeveral years among them; and that others were* *heard to ſpeak in all kinds of languages*: theſe Anſwerers muſt ſhew, how thoſe teſtimonies were verified by facts; and what particular perſons were ſo raiſed, and indued with languages; or muſt alledge at leaſt ſome ſpecial effects of thoſe miracles, credibly reported by the ancient writers, either Heathens or Chriſtians. Again, when any of them declare, *that they were inlightened by the grace of God, with the gift of underſtanding the Scriptures*: it muſt be ſhewn, that thoſe ſpecimens, which they have given as the fruit and proof of that gift, will juſtify ſuch a pretenſion, and may reaſonably paſs for divinely inſpired. This, I ſay, is the onely way of anſwering, which can ſatisfy men of ſenſe; and what alone can in any manner affect or invalidate the force of my argument.

THE
Introductory Diſcourſe.

IT is an opinion commonly received among Chriſtians, and above all, among thoſe of the *Romiſh* communion, that after the days of the Apoſtles, there reſided ſtill in the Primitive Church, through ſeveral ſucceſſive ages, a divine and extraordinary power of working miracles, which was frequently and openly exerted, in confirmation of the truth of the Goſpel, and for the conviction of unbelievers. This is generally alledged by the Divines of all Churches, in their diſputes with the Sceptics, as a ſubſidiary proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Doctrine; and as it is managed by the Church of *Rome*, is rendered more perſuaſive and affecting to the multitude, than what the Goſpel itſelf affords, by deducing the ſucceſſion of thoſe apoſtolical gifts down to our own times, and offering the teſtimony of the ſame miracles to the ſenſes even of the preſent Age.

This then being univerſally adopted by the Papiſts, as an indiſputable fact, or an article rather of the Chriſtian Faith; and eſpouſed likewiſe in part by the Proteſtants, as ſubſervient in ſome degree to the Chriſtian cauſe, I thought it my duty to inquire into the grounds of it. For as it is the part of every Chriſtian, to inform himſelf, as far as he is able, of every thing which his religion requires him, either to believe or to practiſe, ſo it is more eſpecially of thoſe, whom Providence has bleſſed with a capacity, and leiſure, and the opportunities of inquiring; nor yet merely for their own information, but for the inſtruction likewiſe of others, who want the ſame advantages.

It was this which gave riſe to the preſent inquiry, and what induced me alſo, to publiſh the reſult of it. I was not led to the one, by an idle curioſity; nor to the other, by the vanity of combating eſtabliſhed opinions, but the duty of declaring my own: which, by the moſt impartial judgement, that I am able to form, I take not onely to be true, but uſeful alſo, and even neceſſary to the defence of Chriſtianity, as it is generally received, and ought always to be defended, in Proteſtant Churches.

But if the facts and teſtimonies, which obliged me to embrace it, ſhould not have the ſame force, nor ſuggeſt the ſame reflections to others, I ſhall neither be ſurprized nor concerned at it: for it is every man's right to judge for himſelf; and a difference of opinion is as natural to us, as a difference of taſte: and when the ſenſual faculties are perpetually paſſing different judgements on the ſame objects in different men, it cannot be thought ſtrange, that the intellectual, in which nature ſeems to have formed a greater diſparity, ſhould act with the ſame variety. But if, to the principles implanted in our nature, we add that peculiar biaſs, which every individual receives from education, example, or habit; and conſider what ſtrong prejudices, a zeal for opinions once imbibed, or an intereſt eſpecially accruing from them, is apt to inſtil even into the better ſort, we ſhould have cauſe rather to wonder, that any number of men ſhould ever be of one mind, in any quæſtion of difficulty or importance. Hence contrary doctrines in religion are frequently deduced from the ſame texts, and contrary ſyſtems of politics, from the ſame monuments.

Whatever judgement therefore any other man may form, or whatever he may write, on the ſubject of this performance, I ſhall not eaſily be drawn into any controverſy with him about it: but contenting myſelf with the diſcharge of my own conſcience, by this free declaration of my real ſentiments, and indulging the ſame liberty to every body elſe, ſhall leave the reſt to the judgement of the public. I do not mean however, by this profeſſion, to preclude myſelf ſo intirely from all farther concern with the preſent argument, as not to be ready on all occaſions, to acknowledge any miſtake, of which I may be convinced, in the repreſentation of any fact, or teſtimony, or character, which I have applied to the ſupport of it, and to retract it, in the ſame publick manner, in which I committed it.

But beſides that general obligation, which is common to me with all other Chriſtians, of ſearching into the origin and evidences of our religion, I found myſelf particularly excited to this taſk, by what I had occaſionally obſerved and heard, of the late growth of Popery in this Kingdom, and the great number of Popiſh books, which have been printed and diſperſed amongſt us, within theſe few years: in which their writers make much uſe of that prejudice, in favor of *primitive antiquity*, which prevails even in this Proteſtant Country, towards drawing weak people into their cauſe, and ſhewing their worſhip to be the beſt, becauſe it is the moſt conformable to that ancient pattern. But the moſt powerful of all their arguments, and what gains them the moſt proſelytes, is, their confident atteſtation of miracles, as ſubſiſting ſtill in their Church, and the clear ſucceſſion of them, which they deduce through all hiſtory, from the Apoſtolic times, down to our own. This their Apologiſts never fail to diſplay, with all the force of their rhetoric; and with good reaſon; ſince it is a proof, of all others, the moſt ſtriking to vulgar minds, and the moſt deciſive indeed to all minds, as far it is believed to be true.

Thus one of their principal Champions, with whom I have been engaged, demonſtrates the orthodoxy of their faith, and their true deſcent from that Church, to which our Lord has promiſed his preſence to the end of the world. For ſpeaking of the miracles of the Pagans, which I had oppoſed to thoſe of the Papiſts, he ſays, "God has been pleaſed in every age, to work "far more evident miracles in his Church, by "the miniſtry of his Saints; in raiſing the dead "to life; in curing the blind and the lame; in "caſting out Devils; in healing in a moment "inveterate diſeaſes, and the like ſtupendous "works of his power; atteſted by the moſt "authentic monuments; and very frequently, "as may be ſeen in the acts of the canonization "of Saints, by the depoſitions of innumerable "eye-witneſſes, examined upon oath; and by "the public notoriety of the facts: which kind "of miracles, ſo authentically atteſted, will be "to all ages a ſtanding evidence, that the "Church, in whoſe communion they have all "been wrought, is not that idolatrous, pagan "Church, which the Doctor pretends, but the "true ſpouſe of Chriſt [a]." And in a ſecond

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[a] See *Catholic Chriſtian*, Præf. xviii.

N.B. I have been well informed, that among the deſerters from the *Engliſh* army in *Flanders*, who were taken in the time of the late rebellion, and ſhot to death in *London*, there was one, who profeſſed to die in the *Romiſh* Communion, and being aſked by the Clergyman, who aſſiſted him, what were the motives, which induced him piece, which the ſame writer has ſince publiſhed, he promiſes to give us an *hiſtory of the Chriſtian miracles* in a particular treatiſe, deduced, I ſuppoſe, from the earlieſt ages, down to the preſent.

Now *theſe pious cheats of the Romiſh Church*, as Mr. *Leſlie* ſays, *are the foreſt diſgraces of Chriſtianity, and bid the faireſt of any one contrivance to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Chriſt, and the whole truth of the Goſpel, by putting them all upon the ſame foot* [b]. This hiſtory therefore of miracles, which is promiſed by that writer, induced me, more particularly at this time, to inquire into the genuin ſtate and ſucceſſion of them, through all the ſeveral ages of the Chriſtian Church, from the times of the Apoſtles; in order to diſcover the preciſe period and dura-

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to forſake the religion in which he was bred, made anſwer, "That a Prieſt of a "very grave and civil behaviour had aſſured him, that "miracles had been wrought "in confirmation of the Popiſh doctrine, and particularly, that a Proteſtant wo"man came one day to their "Sacrament, with intent to "make ſport with it, and in"ſtead of ſwallowing the "conſecrated bread, found "means to convey it into her "pocket; but when ſhe was "making merry afterwards "in company, with what ſhe "had done, and was going "to produce the piece of "bread, which ſhe had pock"eted, ſhe found it changed "into real fleſh and blood." And he added, "that there "was no reaſon to imagine, "that a perſon, of ſo reve"rend a character, could "have any deſign or intereſt, "to deceive him in the atteſt"ation of ſuch a miracle."

[b] See *Leſlie's* Short method, Vol. I. p. 24.

tion of them; and to ſettle ſome rule of diſcerning the true from the falſe; ſo as to be able to give a proper reaſon, for admitting the miracles of one age, and rejecting thoſe of another.

It muſt be confeſſed, however, in the firſt place, that this claim of a miraculous power, which is now peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, was univerſally aſſerted and believed in all Chriſtian countries, and in all ages of the Church, till the time of the Reformation. For Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory makes no difference between one age and another; but carries on the ſucceſſion of its miracles, as of all other common events, through all of them indifferently, to that memorable period. But the light of the Reformation diſpelled the charm: and what *Cicero* ſays of the *Pythian Oracle*, may be as truly ſaid of the Popiſh miracles; *when men began to be leſs credulous, their power vaniſhed* [c]. For that ſpirit of inquiry, with which Chriſtendom was then animated, detected the cheat, and expoſed to public view, the hidden ſprings and machinery of thoſe lying wonders, by which the world had been ſeduced and enſlaved to the tyranny of *Rome* [d].

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[c] Quando autem iſta vis evanuit, an poſtquam homines minus creduli eſſe cœperunt? Cic. De Divin. ii. 57.

[d] Some of their Images were brought to *London*, and publicly broken there at *St. Paul's Croſs*, in the ſight of the people; that they might be fully convinced of the juggling impoſtures of the Monks. And in particular,

And as the miracles of that age could not ſtand the teſt of a ſcrutiny, but were found, upon trial, to be the forgeries of a corrupt Clergy, ſo it gave juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, that thoſe *golden legends* of them, as they were called, which had been tranſmitted to them from their Anceſtors, were of no better ſtamp, and that the Church of Chriſt had long been governed by the ſame arts. This alſo was found to be true by thoſe, who made it their buſineſs to ſearch into the records of paſt ages: where, though it was eaſy to trace the marks of the ſame fictions, exerted in the ſame manner, and for the ſame ends, even up to the early times of the primitive Church, yet it was difficult, to fix the origin of them, or to mark the preciſe æra, in which the cheat firſt began.

Many learned men among the Proteſtants have attempted indeed to ſettle this point; but with ſo little ſucceſs, as to leave it at laſt as uncertain as they found it; none of them having

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the *Crucifix of Boxeley in Kent*, commonly called *the Rood of Grace*; to which many pilgrimages had been made; becauſe it was obſerved ſometimes to bow, and to lift itſelf up; to ſhake and ſtir its head, hands and feet; to rowl its eyes; move the lips; and bend its brows: all which were looked upon by the abuſed multitude, as the effects of a divine power. Theſe were now publicly diſcovered to have been cheats. For the ſprings were ſhewed, by which all theſe motions were made, &c. See *Burnet's* Hiſtory of the Reformation, Vol. I. 242.

been able to adjuſt the exact limits between true and falſe miracles, or to ſhew, by any ſolid reaſon, how long after the days of the Apoſtles, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit continued in the Church, or in what age they were actually withdrawn.

The moſt prevailing opinion is, that they ſubſiſted through the three firſt Centuries, and then ceaſed in the beginning of the fourth; or as ſoon as Chriſtianity came to be eſtabliſhed by the civil power. This, I ſay, ſeems to be the moſt prevailing notion at this day, among the generality of the Proteſtants; who think it reaſonable to imagine, that miracles ſhould then ceaſe, when the end of them was obtained, and the Church no longer in want of them; being now delivered from all danger, and ſecure of ſucceſs, under the protection of the greateſt power on earth.

Agreeably to this notion, Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* ſays, "that on the firſt planting of the Chri-"ſtian religion in the world, God was pleaſed "to accompany it with a miraculous power; "but after it was planted, that power ceaſed, "and God left it to be maintained by ordinary "ways." And in another place, ſpeaking of the particular gift *of caſting out Devils*, he obſerves, "that it continued the longeſt of any, "and there was reaſon that it ſhould continue, "as long as the Devil reigned, and Pagan Idol-

" atry was kept up.—But when the powers of " the world became Chriſtian, and Satan's " kingdom was every where deſtroyed, then " this miraculous gift alſo ceaſed, there being " no farther occaſion for it [e]." The late Dr. *Marſhall* alſo, who tranſlated the works of St. *Cyprian* into engliſh, taking notice of the continuance of miracles and ſupernatural gifts, and eſpecially of *prophecies and viſions*, in that *Cyprianic* age, declares, " that there are ſucceſſive " evidences of them, which ſpeak full and home " to this point, from the beginning of Chriſti" anity down to the age of *Conſtantine*, in whoſe " times, when Chriſtianity had acquired the " ſupport of human powers, thoſe extraordina" ry aſſiſtances were diſcontinued [f]." Yet this opinion, though generally received by the Proteſtants, is found liable ſtill to ſuch objections, and perplexed with ſuch difficulties, that even thoſe, who principally eſpouſe it, cannot wholly acquieſce in it, but are forced to propoſe it with ſome reſerve and exception.

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of the moſt zealous admirers of primitive Antiquity, and who has deduced the hiſtory of its miracles with the greateſt accuracy, through the three firſt Centuries, cloſes his account of them, with the converſion of the Roman Empire to Chriſtianity; not daring, as he frequently declares, to venture any farther, on account of *the fabulous genius and manifeſt impoſtures of the fourth Century* [g]. But though he ſuppoſes the true miracles to have generally ceaſed from that time, yet he finds ſome particular inſtances of them, ſo ſtrongly atteſted by the Fathers of the beſt credit, thro' the reſt of the ſame century, that he cannot but admit them, as exceptions to his general rule [h].

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[e] Serm. Fol. 3. it. Vol. iii. p. 488. Edit. 1735. [f] Epiſtles of *Cypr.* VII. not. b.

Mr. *Whiſton* contends, "that theſe miraculous powers were totally withdrawn at the "very time when the *Athanaſian Hereſy*, as he "calls it, was eſtabliſhed by the ſecond coun"cil of *Conſtantinople*, about *A. D.* 381: and "that as ſoon as the Church became *Atha*"*naſian*, *Antichriſtian*, and *Popiſh*, they ceaſed "immediately, and the Devil lent it his own "cheating and fatal powers in their ſtead [i]."

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[g] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti ſeculi impoſtorumque genium referentia, ut nolim ea certioribus immiſcere—Quam fuerint quarti ſeculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, *è vita Pauli Hieronymiana*; & *Athanaſiana Antonii*, &c. intelligimus. Diſſert. in Iren. ii. § LV.

Ex ipſa miraculorum hiſtoria ſatis conſtat, a quarto tandem ſeculo & temporibus *Euſebii*, ſenſim decreviſſe vera, & in deſuetudinem abiiſſe miracula. ib. LIX.

Ego me infra prima ſecula contineo, ante receptam in Imperio Chriſtianitatem, &c. ib. LXII.

[h] *Chryſoſtomus* — fatetur ſuo etiamnum tempore nonnulla fuiſſe ſigna, ſed & numero pauca, & locis variis hinc inde diſperſa.—Qui hæc itaque agnovit negatis tamen aliis, erat proculdubio & illa agniturus, ſi pari omnia evidentia conſtitiſſent. ib. LIX.

[i] See his Account of *the Dæmoniacs*, p. 65.

Dr. *Waterland*, on the other hand, the perpetual defender of *Athanaſius*, in his treatiſe on *the importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, often affirms, "that the miraculous powers of the "Church continued through the three firſt cen-"turies at leaſt, as a manifeſt proof, that the "true faith was there preſerved, where the ſpirit "of truth ſo viſibly reſided [k]: and in the addenda to the ſame work, he corrects himſelf, as it were, for a miſtake, in confining them to ſuch narrow limits, which, on the authority of *Paulinus*, he endeavours to extend, *to the latter end of the fourth century* [l].

Dr. *Chapman* declares, "that though the "eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by the civil "power, abated the neceſſity of miracles, and "occaſioned a viſible decreaſe of them, yet af-"ter that revolution, there were inſtances of "them ſtill, as public, as clear, as well atteſted, "as any in the earlier ages [m]."

And not content, like Dr. *Waterland*, with carrying the ſucceſſion of them to the end of the fourth century, he goes on to aſſure us, *that the fifth alſo had its portion, though ſmaller than the fourth* [n]: which he confirms by ſeveral inſtances, drawn from the middle of that fifth century, and then refers us to Dr. *Berriman*, for the accurate defence of another miracle, wrought in confutation of the *Arian Hereſy*, which brings us to the end of it [*o*].

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[k] See p. 299, 382, 383, 425.

[l] Ibid. p. 497.

[m] See *Miſcell. Tracts*, p. 170.

[n] Ibid. p. 173.

Thus theſe eminent Divines, purſuing their ſeveral ſyſtems, and ambitious of improving ſtill upon each other's diſcoveries, ſeem unwarily to have betrayed the Proteſtant cauſe, by transferring the miraculous powers of the Church; the pretended inſigns of truth and orthodoxy, into the hands of its enemies; and yielding up this ſacred depoſitum, like the old *Ancilia of Pagan Rome*, to the defence and ſupport of *Popiſh Rome*. For it was in theſe very primitive ages, and eſpecially in the *third*, *fourth*, *and fifth centuries*, *thoſe floriſhing times of miraculous powers*, as Dr. *Chapman* calls them, in which the chief corruptions of Popery were either actually introduced, or the ſeeds of them ſo effectually ſown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits which we now ſee. By theſe corruptions I mean, *the inſtitution of Monkery*; *the worſhip of reliques*; *invocation of Saints*; *prayers for the Dead*; *the ſuperſtitious uſe of Images*; *of the Sacraments*; *of the Sign of the Croſs*; *and of conſecrated oil*; by the efficacy of all which rites, and as a proof of their divine origin, perpetual miracles are affirmed to have been wrought in theſe very centuries.

[*o*] Ibid. p. 175.

For example; Monkery had its beginning in the third, and a full eſtabliſhment in the fourth century: in which all the principal Fathers of the Church, both *Greek* and *Latin*, employed their authority and eloquence, to extol the perfection and recommend the practice of it; by writing the lives of particular Monks; celebrating their wonderful ſanctity and miraculous gifts; and founding monaſteries alſo, where-ever they travelled. St. *Athanaſius* was one of the firſt, who, from the pattern of the *Ægyptian* Monaſteries, introduced them into *Italy and Rome, where they had been held before in utter contempt* [p]. St. *Baſil* calls it *an Angelical inſtitution: a bleſſed and Evangelic life, leading to the manſions of the Lord* [q]. St. *Jerom* declares, *the Societies of Monks and Nuns, to be the very flower and moſt precious ſtone among all the ornaments of the Church* [r]. St. *Chryſoſtom* calls it, *a way of life worthy of heaven, nor at all inferior to that of Angels* [s]. And St. *Auſtin* ſtiles them always, in a peculiar manner, *the Servants of God* [t]. By the influence therefore of theſe Fathers, and the many lies and forged miracles, which they diligently propagated in honor of the Monks, innumerable Monaſteries, as they themſelves tell us, were over the *eaſtern World*; but eſpecially in *Syria*, *Palæſtine*, and *Egypt*; whoſe deſerts were covered with them; and where, in the next age, there were ſome, which are ſaid to have had *five thouſand Monks* in them [u].

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[p] Ignominioſum, ut tunc putabatur, & vile in populis nomen—Hieron. Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 780. Edit. Benedict.

[q] Baſil. Oper. Tom. iii. p. 101, 261, 310, 473.

[r] Certe flos quidam & pretioſiſſimus lapis inter Eccleſiaſtica ornamenta, Monachorum & Virginum chorus eſt. Hieron. ib. p. 551.

[s] Καὶ γὰρ πολιτείαν οὐρανῷ πρέπουσαν εἵλαντο, ϗ ἀγγέλων οὐδὲν χεῖρον διάκεινται. Chryſ. Oper. Tom. i. p. 94. A. Edit. Benedict.

N. B. This ſame Father wrote three books againſt *the Oppugners of the Monaſtic life*; [Oper. T. i. p. 44.] and a ſeparate one beſides, to prove it to be preferable even to that of a King. [ib. p. 116.]

Among many other inſtances of this preference, he obſerves that a King, when depoſed and fallen from his throne, cannot recover it without the utmoſt difficulty; whereas a Monk, who falls from his virtue, quickly recovers it by his penitence: of which he gives a curious example, in a ſtory, which he relates in another place, of an old Monk, who, after he had nobly ſuſtained all the difficulties and fatigues of that diſcipline, was caught at laſt by the wiles of Satan, and fired with ſo violent a concupiſcence for women, that he ran away from his Cell, to a bawdy-houſe in the neighbouring City, in order to quench his flame: where he had no ſooner ſatiated his luſt, than returning preſently to his duty, he became ſo ſtrict a penitent, that within a ſhort time after, when the country was afflicted with a famine, the people were directed by an expreſs revelation from heaven, to apply to him, as the onely perſon, who could relieve them from it by his prayers; by the force of which, the famine was accordingly averted. Ibid. 29, 30.

[t] *De Servis Dei* ſæpiſſime dicitur, tot annos ille in hoc vel in illo Monaſterio ſedit. Auguſt. Serm. 215. Op. T. v. p. 947. D. Edit. Bened.

Cupiebas in ea vita vivere, in qua *Servi Dei*, Monachi vivunt. Epiſt. ad Bonifac. 220. T. ii. p. 812.

[u] Exemplo itaque ejus, per totam Palæſtinam innumerabilia Monaſteria eſſe cœperunt. [Hieron. Op. T. iv. par. 2. p. 84.] Quid refera-

As to *the reliques of the Martyrs*, we find St. *Chryſoſtom* frequently haranguing on the great bleſſings, which the Church reaped from them, *and the daily miracles which were wrought by them* [x]: and he concludes one of his Homilies, on Two female Martyrs, *Bernice and Proſdoce*, in the following manner; "with this ardor, therefore, let us fall down before their "reliques: let us embrace their coffins; for "theſe may have ſome power, ſince their bones "have ſo great an one: and not onely on the "day of their Feſtival, but on other days like"wiſe, let us fix ourſelves as it were to them, "and entreat them to be our patrons [y]:" and in his other Homilies, he often uſes the ſame peroration "to dwell in their Sepulchres, to fix "themſelves to their coffins; that not onely "their bones, but their tombs, and their urns "alſo overflowed with benedictions [z]."

St. *Baſil* informs us, "that all, who were "preſſed with any difficulty or diſtreſs, uſed to "fly for relief to the tombs of the Martyrs; and "whoſoever did but touch their reliques, ac"quired ſome ſhare of their ſanctity [a].", In the

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mus Armenios, quid Perſas, quid Indiæ & Æthiopiæ populos, ipſamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem Monachorum —cunctaque Orientis examina—ibid. p. 551.

[x] Ἱκανὰ μὲν τὸν λόγον πιϛώσασθαι, καὶ τὰ καθ' ἑκάϛην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν μαρτύρων γινόμενα θαύματα. Chryſ. Op. T. ii. p. 555. Ed. Bened.

[y] Ibid. p. 645. C.

[z] Ibid. p. 669. E.

[a] Baſil. Op. T. ii. p. 155. it. T. iii. 535.

the ſame age alſo, when *Vigilantius*, a learned and eminent Preſbyter of the Church wrote a book juſt as a Proteſtant would now write; *againſt the inſtitution of Monks*; *the celibacy of the Clergy*; *praying for the Dead, and to the Martyrs*; *adoring their Reliques*; *celebrating their Vigils*; *and lighting up candles to them after the manner of the Pagans*; St. *Jerom*, who anſwers him, defends all thoſe rites with a moſt outrageous zeal and acrimony of language, and treats *Vigilantius*, as a moſt profligate Heretic, uttering the blaſphemies, with which the Devil had inſpired him againſt the ſacred doctrines of the Church: "Anſwer me, ſays he, how it comes to paſs, "that in this vile duſt and aſhes of the Mar- "tyrs, there is ſo great a manifeſtation of ſigns "and wonders. I ſee, thou moſt wretched of "mortals, what thou art ſo grieved at, what ſo "afraid of; that unclean ſpirit, which compels "thee to write thus, has oft been tortured, and "even now is tortured by this vile duſt [b]." St *Auſtin* alſo affirms, "that at *Milan*, while he "was there preſent, the reliques of the Martyrs, "*Protaſius* and *Gervaſius*, which lay buried in a "place unknown, were reveled to St. *Ambroſe* "in a dream; and that by the touch onely of "the ſame reliques, a blind man was reſtored to "his ſight; of which the whole people was "witneſs, who flocked in crouds to the bodies "of the ſaid Martyrs [c]."

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[b] Hieron. tom. iv. par. ii. p. 285, 286.

[c] Immenſo populo teſte res geſta eſt. De Civ. Dei,

In the ſacrament alſo of *the Euchariſt*, ſeveral ſtrange abuſes were introduced long before this fourth age. In *Juſtin Martyr's* time, within fifty years after the days of the Apoſtles, *the cup was conſtantly mixed with water, and a portion of the conſecrated elements ſent alſo to the abſent* [*d*]: which ſoon became the ſource of much Superſtition. For that mixture, conſidered at firſt as prudential onely, and indifferent, is declared by *Irenæus, to have been taught and practiſed by our Saviour* [*e*]; and by St. *Cyprian*, to have been injoined to himſelf *by a divine revelation* [*f*]. The conſecrated bread alſo, which was ſent at firſt onely to the ſick, was in *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days, carried home by the communicants, and locked up in boxes as a divine treaſure for their private uſe [*g*]. From this time it began to work Miracles; and was applied to

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lib. xxii. c. 8. Vid. etiam Hieron. ibid. p. 552. Samariam pergere, & Johannis Baptiſtæ, & Eliſæi, & Abdiæ pariter *cineres adorare*.

[*d*] Juſt. Mart. Apol. i. p. 96. Edit. Thirlb.

[*e*] Accipens panem, ſuum corpus eſſe confitebatur; & temperamentum calicis, ſuum ſanguinem confirmavit. Iren. l. iv. c. 57. it. l. v. c. 2, & 36.

[*f*] Nec nos putes, noſtra & humana conſcribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter aſſumere—admonitos autem nos ſcias, ut in calice offerendo Dominica traditio ſervetur—ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur. Epiſt. ad Cæcil. lxiii. Edit. Rigalt.

[*g*] Cum quædam arcam ſuam, in qua Domini ſanctum fuit, manibus indignis tentaſſet aperire, igne inde ſurgente deterrita eſt. Cypr. de Lapſis, p. 176.

drive Devils out of haunted houſes [h]; and carried with them by people, in their journeys and voyages, as an amulet or charm, to ſecure them from all dangers both by ſea and land [i].

This Sacrament was adminiſtred likewiſe, in all their public communions, to infants, even of the tendereſt age, before they were able to ſpeak [k]: and was conſtantly ſtyled, *the Sacrifice of the body of Chriſt*; *which was always offered*

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[h] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, ſive per Sacramenta ejus, &c. *Vid. Auguſt. de Civ. D.* xxii. 8. § 1, 6.

[i] St. *Ambroſe* relates a remarkable inſtance of this, in the caſe of one of his intimate friends, called *Satyrus*; who was a pious and zealous Chriſtian, but had not yet received the Sacrament, or *been initiated*, as he calls it, *in the more perfect myſteries*. In this ſtate, he happened to ſuffer Shipwreck in his paſſage from Afric, and the Ship itſelf to be broken to pieces, upon which, ſays *Ambroſe*, "*Satyrus* not being afraid of death, but to die only, before he had partaken of thoſe myſteries, begged of ſome of the company, who had been initiated, that they would lend him the divine Sacrament (which they carried about with them) not to feed his curioſity, by peeping into the inſide of the Box, but to obtain the benefit of his Faith, for he wrapped up the Myſteries in his Handerchief, and then tying it about his neck, threw himſelf into the Sea; never troubling himſelf to look out for a plank, which might help him to ſwim, ſince he wanted nothing more, than the Arms of his Faith: nor did his Hopes fail him, for he was the firſt of the company, who got ſafe to the Shore." De Exceſſu Satyri, l. i. § 43, 44. p. 1125. Op. T. ii. Ed. Bened.

[k] Cypr. ibid. p. 175.

up, as *Cyprian* ſays, *for the Martyrs, iu their annual Feſtivals:* as it was alſo, according to St. *Jerom*, *by the Biſhop of Rome, over the venerable bones of St. Peter and St. Paul* [*l*]. Hence flowed thoſe amazing titles, which were given to it in this fourth age; of *moſt tremendous myſtery*; *dreadful ſolemnity*; *terrible to Angels*; *Myſtic table* [*m*]; *whoſe very Utenſils* and *ſacred coverings*, as St. *Jerom* ſays, *were not to be conſidered, like things inanimate, and void of ſenſe, to have no ſanctity, but to be worſhiped with the ſame majeſty, as the body and blood of our Lord* [*n*]. And what is all this, but a deſcription of *that Sacrifice of the Maſs*, which the *Romaniſts* offer at this day, both *for the living and the dead*; and the ſame miraculous tales, which they ſtill relate, of their *tranſubſtantiated* bread?

The cuſtom of *praying for the dead*, had alſo a very early origin: for it was common, as we learn from *Tertullian*, even in the ſecond century [*o*]; and became the univerſal practice of the following ages: ſo that in the fourth, we find it reckoned as a ſort *of Hereſy*, to deny the efficacy of it [*p*]. The purpoſe of it was to procure relief and refreſhment to the departed ſouls, in ſome intermediate ſtate of expiatory pains, which, according to the opinion of thoſe times, all men were to ſuffer for their ſins, except the Martyrs, and Saints of the firſt claſs [*q*]. A doctrine and practice, which could not fail of giving birth to the Popiſh Purgatory,

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[*l*] Sacrificia pro eis ſemper, ut meminiſtis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum paſſiones & dies, anniverſaria commemoratione celebramus. Id. Epiſt. xxxiv. p. 48. Vid. it. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. p. 284.

[*m*] Επ' αὐτῶν πάλιν φρικωδεστάτων μυστηρίων. [Chryſoſt. Oper. T. x. p. 568.] τραπέζης; καὶ σφόδρα φρικωδεστάτης. [Ib. p. 245. D.] ἣν καὶ Ἄγγελοι φρίττουσι. Id. T. xi. p. 22. C.

[*n*] Ut diſcant, qui ignorant,—qua debeant veneratione ſancta ſuſcipere, & altaris Chriſti miniſterio deſervire: ſacroſque calices, & ſancta velamina, & cetera, quæ ad cultum Dominicæ paſſionis pertinent, non quaſi inania & ſenſu carentia, ſanctimoniam non habere, ſed ex conſortio corporis & ſanguinis Domini, eadem qua corpus ejus & ſanguis majeſtate veneranda. Hieron.

Ep. 88. ad Theophil. T. iv, par. ii. 728.

[*o*] Enimvero & pro anima ejus orat, & refrigerium interim adpoſtulat ei, & in prima reſurrectione conſortium, & offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus. De Monogam. x. p. 682. A. Edit. Nic. Rigalt. *N. B.* This paſſage may want a little explication. *Tertullian*, in this treatiſe, is labouring to prove, that the ſecond marriages of Chriſtians are utterly unlawful, and forbidden to them by the Goſpel, and though the parties be ſeparated from each other by the death of either, that the matrimonial bond ſtill ſubſiſts, and obliges the Survivor: *For the widow*, ſays he, *prays for the Soul of her departed huſband; and begs refreſhment for him in his intermediate ſtate; and to be a partner with him in the firſt reſurrection; and makes an oblation for him every year, on the Day of his death.* By all which ſhe acknowledges and keeps up her conjugal union, and cannot therefore marry any other man; becauſe, to have one huſband in the Spirit and another in the Fleſh, is adultery, *&c.*

[*p*] Vid. Epiphan. Hæreſ. lxxv. § 3 & 7.

[*q*] Vid. Orig. con. Celſum, l. vi. p. 292. Tertull. De Anim. c. 55, 58.

The *Sign of the Croſs* likewiſe, was the ſubject of much ſuperſtition in thoſe ages. "*Every* "*ſtep that we take*, ſays *Tertullian*; *when we* "*come in or go out*; *put on our cloaths*, *or our* "*ſhoes*; *when we bathe*, *eat*, *light up candles*, *go to* "*bed*, *or ſit down*; *we mark our foreheads with* "*the ſign of the Croſs*. "If for theſe, and other "acts of diſcipline of the ſame kind, you de- "mand a text of Scripture, you will find none; "but tradition will be alledged to you, as the "preſcriber of them [r]." It was thought a ſure preſervative againſt all ſorts of malignity, poi- ſons, or faſcination; and effectual to drive away evil ſpirits; and is affirmed by the principal Fa- thers of the fourth century, to have wrought many illuſtrious miracles. "This ſign, ſays "St. *Chryſoſtom*, both in the days of our Fore- "fathers, and in our own, has thrown open "gates, that were ſhut; deſtroyed the effects "of poiſonous drugs; diſſolved the force of "hemlock; and cured the bites of venomous "beaſts [s]."

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[r] Ad omnem progreſſum atque promotum; ad omnem aditum atque exitum, ad veſtitum, ad calciatum, ad lavacra, ad menſas, ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad ſedilia, quæcunque nos converſatio exercet, frontem crucis ſignaculo terimus. Harum & aliarum ejuſmodi diſciplinarum ſi legem expoſtules Scripturarum, nullam invenies, traditio tibi prætendetur auctrix, &c. De Coron. iii.

[s] Τοῦτο τὸ σημεῖον ϗ ἐπὶ τῶν προγόνων ἡμῶν, ϗ νῦν, θύρας ἀνέῳξε κεκλεισμένας, &c. T. vii, p. 552. A.

The *ſacred oil* alſo of the Church, was held in great veneration in theſe ſame days, as an univerſal remedy in all diſeaſes. For which purpoſe, it was either prepared and diſpenſed by Prieſts and holy Monks; or was taken from *the lamps* which were burning before the reliques of the Martyrs. St. *Jerom* mentions great numbers, who had been cured of *the bites of venomous animals, by touching their wounds with the firſt ſort* [t]: And St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks of many, who had been healed of their diſtempers, *by anointing themſelves with the ſecond* [u]. And St. *Auſtin* affirms, from his own knowledge, that a *young woman had been freed from the Devil*; and *a young man reſtored even from death to life, by the uſe of it* [x].

Laſtly, as to *Images and Pictures*, it appears from St. *Chryſoſtom*, that great numbers of them were ſtanding in the principal Churches of that age [*y*]; and from the other writers of the ſame age; that the acts of the Saints and Martyrs began to be painted on the walls of thoſe particular Churches, which were dedicated to their names [*z*]: and it is natural to imagine, that they would not long be conſidered, as mere ornaments, or memorials, or books, as they were called, for the illiterate, but would gradually acquire a ſhare of that veneration, which the bones of thoſe, whom they repreſented, had already acquired in the ſame Churches: and we are told accordingly by St. *Auſtin*, that he knew many, *who were actually the adorers of them* [*a*].

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[t] Benedicto itaque oleo univerſi agricolæ atque paſtores, tangentes vulnera, certam ſalutem reſumebant. Vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 86.

[u] Καὶ ἴσασιν ὅσοι μετὰ ϖίϛεως ϗ εὐκαίρως ἐλαίῳ χρισάμενοι νοσήματα ἔλυσαν. Chryſ. ib. p. 337. C.

[x] Hipponenſem quandam Virginem ſcio, cum ſe oleo perunxiſſet, cui pro illa orans Preſbyter inſtillaverat lacrymas ſuas, mox a Dæmonio fuiſſe ſanatam. [De Civ. D. l. xxii. c. 8. § 8.]

Rurſus apud nos, *Irenæi* cujuſdam filius ægritudine extinctus eſt. Cumque corpus jaceret exanimum, atque exequiæ pararentur, amicorum quidam ſuggeſſit, ut ejuſdem Martyris oleo, corpus perungeretur. Factum eſt, & r[illegible]ixit. Ibid. § 18.

Theſe were the principles and the practices of the fourth Century; as they are declared by the moſt eminent Fathers of that age: whence every one may ſee, what a reſemblance they bear to the preſent rites of the Popiſh Church. But ſome perhaps will be apt to ſuſpect, that I am really defending the corruptions of that Church, by aſſigning to them an origin ſo ancient and venerable: and the ſuſpicion indeed may ſeem plauſible, ſince I have been ſaying little elſe, but what the Papiſts themſelves would ſay on the ſame occaſion. Yet it is no more, than what fact and truth oblige me to ſay; and no controverſy, I hope, will ever heat me, or prejudice biaſs me ſo far, as to make me deny or diſſemble, what the conviction of my own mind requires me to confeſs. But whatever advantage the Romaniſts may hope to reap from this conceſſion, it really gives them none at all. Our diſpute with them is, not how ancient, but how true their doctrines and practices are: And if they are not derived from Chriſt or his Apoſtles, nor founded in the holy Scriptures, it is wholly indifferent to us Proteſtants, from what age they drew their birth; whether it was from the *four firſt*, or the *four laſt* centuries of the Church.

[*y*] Oper. Tom. xi. p. 78.

[*z*] Forte requiratur quanam ratione gerendi
Sederit hæc nobis ſententia, *pingere Sanctas*
Raro more domos, &c. Vid. Paulini Oper. Natal. ix.

[*a*] Novi multos eſſe Sepulchrorum & picturarum adoratores. De Morib. Eccleſ. Cathol. Op. T. i. p. 34.

But this ſhort ſketch, which I have been giving of thoſe primitive times, was not deſigned ſo much to illuſtrate the origin of their rites, as to lay open the grounds of their miracles; and to ſhew what reaſons the Romiſh Church hath to eſpouſe, and what the Proteſtant Churches, if they are conſiſtent with themſelves, to ſuſpect and diſclame them. For example, after the converſion of the *Roman* Empire to Chriſtianity, we ſhall find the greateſt part of their boaſted miracles to have been wrought either by *Monks*, or *Reliques*, or *the Sign of the Croſs*, or *conſecrated Oil:* wherefore if we admit the Miracles, we muſt neceſſarily admit the rites, for the ſake of which they were wrought: they both reſt on the ſame bottom, and mutually eſtabliſh each other. For it is a maxim, which muſt be allowed by all Chriſtians, that whenever any ſacred rite or religious inſtitution becomes the inſtrument of miracles, we ought to conſider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation. "I "know, ſays one of the ableſt writers of the *Romiſh* Church, "by the evidence of manifeſt and "incorrupt tradition, that there hath always "been a never-interrupted ſucceſſion of men "from the Apoſtles time, believing, profeſſing, "and practiſing ſuch and ſuch doctrines, by "evident argument of credibility, as miracles, "ſanctity, unity, *&c.* and by all thoſe ways, "whereby the Apoſtles and our bleſſed Saviour "himſelf confirmed their doctrines: And we "are aſſured, that what the ſaid never-inter-"rupted Church propoſeth, doth deſerve to "be accepted and acknowledged as a divine "truth [*b*]." And thus far we muſt own, the Jeſuit argues rightly; that if we receive thoſe *arguments of credibility*, as he calls them, we muſt receive the doctrines which accompany them, as ſo many *divine verities, reveled and atteſted by Almighty God.* So that if the authority of a *Chryſoſtom*, or a *Jerom*, or an *Auſtin* can oblige us to believe the miracles of the fourth century, they muſt oblige us alſo, to eſpouſe the rites, which thoſe miracles confirmed, and thoſe Fathers practiſed.

[*b*] See Mr. *Knot*, on Charity maintained, &c. in the Works of *Chillingworth*, 7th Edit. c, vi. p 228. § 6.

Dr. *Chapman*, however, not aware perhaps of this conſequence, or not allowing it to have any force, is not ſatisfied with aſſerting the miracles of the fourth century, but, as if more were ſtill wanted to the ſupport of the Chriſtian cauſe, frankly undertakes the defence alſo of the fifth; in which all thoſe ſuperſtitious practices, above mentioned, had gained a greater root, and more general eſtabliſhment: And while the warmeſt admirers of the primitive times, can hardly digeſt the wonderful tales of the fourth age, on the united teſtimony of all its renowned Fathers, he thinks himſelf obliged, to eſpouſe thoſe of the more corrupt age, which follows, upon the ſingle authority of *Theodoret.*

But to this, I ſhall ſpeak more fully hereafter, in the following work; where I ſhall conſider thoſe particular miracles, which Dr. *Chapman* has ſelected, as the proper objects of our belief, and defended as ſuch, againſt the enemies of the Chriſtian faith. In the mean while, I ſhall offer onely a ſingle paſſage from the ſame *Theodoret*, on whoſe teſtimony he lays ſo great a ſtreſs, which will help, not onely to confirm what I have already been advancing, but give us a ſpecimen alſo, of the character of this Father, as well as of the ſtate of Chriſtianity in this fifth age.

" The Temples of our Martyrs, ſays he, are " ſhining and conſpicuous: eminent for their

" grandor, and the variety of their ornaments; " and diſplaying far and wide the ſplendor of " their beauty. Theſe we viſit, not once or " twice, or five times in the year, but frequently " offer up hymns each day to the Lord of them; in health we beg the continuance of it; " in ſickneſs, the removal of it; the childleſs " beg children, and the barren to become mothers; and when theſe bleſſings are obtained, " we beg the ſecure enjoyment of them. When " we undertake any journey, we beg them to be " our companions and guides in it: and when " we return ſafe, we pay them our thanks: and " that thoſe, who pray with faith and ſincerity, " obtain what they aſk, is manifeſtly teſtified by " the number of offerings, which are made to " them, in conſequence of the benefits received. " For ſome offer the figures of eyes; ſome of " feet; ſome of hands, made either of gold or " of ſilver, which the Lord accepts, tho' but of " little value; meaſuring the gift, by the faculties " of the giver. But all theſe are the evident " proofs of the cures of as many diſtempers; " being placed there, as monuments of the fact, " by thoſe, who have been made whole. The " ſame monuments likewiſe proclame the power " of the dead. Whoſe power alſo demonſtrates " their God, to be the true God [c]."

Now this is nothing elſe, but the very picture of that ſame ſuperſtition, which is practiſed at this day by the Papiſts, and was borrowed of old from the Pagans [d]. *Livy* tells the ſame thing of the Temples of the Heathen Gods which *Theodoret* does here of the Temples of their Saints; that *they were rich in the number of offerings*, which the people uſed to make *in return for the cures*, and benefits which they had received from them [e]. In both caſes, we allow the offerings to be real, but take the cures, or the miraculous part of them at leaſt, to be imaginary: and as we reject *Livy's* miracles without ſcruple, or any hurt to the faith of hiſtory, ſo we may reject *Theodoret's* too, without ſhaking the evidence of any thing elſe, that is credible.

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[c] Serm. viii. de Martyrib.

Thus we ſee, to what a ſtate of things, the miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries would reduce us: they would call us back again to the old ſuperſtition of our anceſtors; would fill us with *Monks, and Reliques, and Maſſes*, and all the other trinkets, which the treaſury of *Rome* can ſupply: for this is the neceſſary effect of that zeal, which would engage us in the defence of them. But if the miracles of theſe later ages muſt needs be rejected; and if, as I have ſaid above, Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory makes no difference between them, and thoſe of the earlier ages, it may reaſonably be aſked, where then are we to ſtop? And to what period muſt we confine ourſelves? And this indeed is the grand difficulty, which was the chief object of my attention, through this whole inquiry; and what has puzzled all the other doctors, who have been conſidering the ſame quæſtion before me. But before I give any anſwer to it, or declare my own opinion, it may be proper, to premiſe a remark or two, on the inſufficiency of the ſeveral ſyſtems already advanced; and to lay down ſome general principles, which may lead us to a more rational ſolution of the matter, than what has hitherto been offered.

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[d] See my Letter from *Rome* on this ſubject.

[e] Epidaurus, inclita Æſculapii nobili templo,— tum donis dives erat, quæ remediorum ſalutarium ægri mercedem ſacraverant Deo. lib. xlv. 28.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as we have ſeen above, chuſes to ſhut up the hiſtory of true miracles with the *three firſt centuries*; condemning thoſe of the fourth, as generally forged and fabulous: for the proof of which, he appeals to the monſtrous fictions, which St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Jerom*, and St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, have related. And thus far, I intirely agree with him; that the pretended miracles of this age are utterly incredible; and particularly thoſe, to which he refers us, and to which we might add many more, affirmed alſo from their own knowledge, by St. *Auſtin*, St. *Epiphanius*, and all the other Saints of the ſame times. Yet after ſo free a cenſure on the miracles of the fourth age, the ſame learned writer thinks it neceſſary ſtill, to make ſome exceptions, for a few of them, which St. *Chryſoſtom* has atteſted. But ſuch a diſtinction appears to be

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be wholly groundleſs: or if there be any difference between this particular Father and the reſt of them, it is clearly to the diſadvantage of *Chryſoſtom*, when conſidered in the character of a witneſs. For his peculiar talents were thoſe of a declamatory Preacher, whoſe art lay, in warming the paſſions, not in convincing the reaſon; and whoſe pompous ſtyle and rhetorical floriſhes, inſtead of being adapted to a ſimple narrative of plain facts, was apt rather to exaggerate plain facts into miracles [*f*]. And as there is no ground for any preference, in his perſonal character, ſo there is none likewiſe in the particular miracles, which he atteſts; which are all ſaid to be wrought, not by the miniſtry of any living and holy men, but by the *reliques of the dead*; or *the oil of their lamps*; or *the ſign of the Croſs.*

Dr. *Waterland* ſeems to have been of the ſame mind in general with Mr. *Dodwell*, concerning the miracles of the fourth century; yet being loth to part with them, and much more, to fix any ſlur on the credit of its principal Fathers, has uſed a little artifice in the manner of declaring it. For after he has often affirmed, *that the miraculous powers of the Church ſubſiſted through the three firſt centuries* at leaſt, he adds the following amendment to it, *Nay, and if we may believe* Paulinus, *who reports it as an eye-witneſs, they*

[*f*] Ac ne forſitan Rhetores vobis diſpliceant, quorum artis eſt veriſimilia magis, quam vera dicere—— Hieron. Oper. T. iv. par. II. p. 236.

continued

continued down to the latter end of the fourth [g]. But why muſt we be referred to *Paulinus* onely, in a quæſtion of ſuch importance? a name unknown to the greateſt part of his readers; while the names of *Athanaſius*, *Baſil*, *Auſtin*, *Jerom*, *Chryſoſtom*, are in every body's mouth, and appealed to by himſelf on every other occaſion; and who have written whole books, on the miracles of that very age, wrought by *Saints, and Monks, and Reliques*; many of which they have reported likewiſe, as eye-witneſſes, as well as *Paulinus*. The omiſſion therefore of theſe greater names, which could not poſſibly be accidental, is a clear, tho' tacit confeſſion that he knew them all to have forfeited their credit, in this particular cauſe: and that even his beloved *Athanaſius*, on whoſe faith he had pinned his own, and on the defence of whoſe orthodoxy, he had ſpent his whole life and ſtudies, was not to be truſted at laſt with the report of a miracle.

But what is it, after all, that *Paulinus* could teach us, more credibly than any of the reſt? He was a noble convert from Paganiſm, and Biſhop of *Nola* in *Italy*: where he built a Church to St. *Felix* the Martyr, with whoſe acts he painted it, and with whoſe reliques he enriched it; and has celebrated, both in proſe and verſe, the miracles performed by thoſe reliques [h]. But the particular miracle, for which we are referred to him by the Doctor as an eye-witneſs, is this; that "when St. *Ambroſe*, upon the conviction of "a certain offender, was pronouncing the ſen-"tence of excommunication againſt him; in "the very inſtant of delivering him over to "Satan, and while the words were yet in his "mouth, the Devil began to ſeize and tear him, "as his own, to the great amazement and won-"der of *Paulinus*, and the reſt, who were pre-"ſent [*i*]."

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[g] Import. of the Trin. p. 497.

[h] Vid. Paulin. Poem. xvii. p. 77, 78. Oper. Edit. Par. 4to.

On the whole, then; after the ſtricteſt attention to what both the antients and the moderns alſo have delivered on this ſubject, I find great reaſon to be convinced, that the pretended miracles of the fourth century, were not onely in general, and for the greateſt part, but intirely and univerſally, the effects of fraud and impoſture. Nor can I ſee the leaſt ground to admit any exception, either with Mr. *Dodwell*, for thoſe reported by St. *Chryſoſtom*; or with Dr. *Waterland*, for thoſe by *Paulinus*: For I take it to be a maxim, on which we may ſafely depend, that wherever the Biſhops, the Clergy, and the principal Champions of the Chriſtian cauſe, are found to be tampering with falſe miracles, and eſtabliſhing new rites and doctrines by lies and forgeries, it would be vain for us, to look for any true miracles in that age, and that Church. And this was actually the caſe of the fourth century: in which all its moſt illuſtrious Fathers, now Saints of the Catholic Church; St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Epiphanius*, St. *Baſil*, St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Auſtin*, and St. *Chryſoſtom*, have all ſeverally recorded and ſolemnly atteſted a number of miracles, ſaid to be wrought in confirmation of ſome favorite inſtitutions of thoſe days, which, in the judgment of all the learned and candid Proteſtants, are manifeſtly fictitious, and utterly incredible.

[*i*] See Dr. *Waterland*, ibid.

We have now therefore gained ſome footing and ground as it were to ſtand upon. For this diſcovery of the ſtate of the fourth century, will reflect freſh light on our ſearches, both backwards and forwards; and from it's middle ſituation, give us a clearer view, as well into the earlier, as the later ages. For example; if we ſuppoſe the miraculous powers of the Church to have been withdrawn, in the beginning of this century, the firſt inference, which it ſuggeſts, is, that they were withdrawn likewiſe through all the ſucceeding centuries. Becauſe the reaſons, for which they are imagined to have ceaſed at this particular period, grow ſtronger ſtill in every later age, as the Church was every day gaining ſtrength and a firmer eſtabliſhment, not onely from the protection of the Magiſtrate, but from an authority and power of its own, independent on the civil Government.

But above all, when, in all theſe later ages, inſtead of meeting with genuin miracles, we find fables and fictions, aſſuming that ſacred character, and abounding ſtill more and more, and, by the pretence of a divine authority, giving a ſanction to *Heathenish Rites and ſuperſtitious Doctrines*, it would be childiſh, to expect the revival of real miracles, unleſs it were to detect and deſtroy the effects of thoſe falſe ones, which were ſo evidently corrupting the faith and worſhip of the Chriſtian Church. Since the miracles then of the fifth century, which our Doctors ſo ſtrenuouſly defend, inſtead of defeating the frauds of the fourth, tend ſtill to confirm them; being performed chiefly by the ſame inſtruments, and for the ſame ends; we muſt neceſſarily rank them all under the ſame claſs of mere forgeries. But theſe advocates of the primitive miracles have not yet given us the leaſt hint, or reaſon to imagine, that they intend to ſtop here, or to confine themſelves even to the fifth century: ſince the ſame principles which carried them ſo far, would carry them ſtill farther, if the credit of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, or its miracles, ſhould happen to be attacked by an Infidel or Heretic.

For example; *Pope Gregory* the firſt, commonly called *the Great*, wrote *four books of Dialogues*, in which he deſcribes *the lives and miracles of the Italian Monks*: many of them from his own knowledge, and the reſt, as he declares, from the teſtimony of grave and venerable perſons, on whoſe fidelity he could depend. Theſe books were written in the end of the ſixth century,

tury, and are filled with a number of ſtories, ſo groſsly abſurd, and fabulous, that it would be difficult, one would think, to find any old woman in theſe days, ſo weakly credulous, as to believe them. They inform us of many perſons "actually raiſed from the dead; many blind "reſtored to ſight; and, all ſorts of diſeaſes "cured, by the prayers or touch of thoſe "Monks [*k*]: Of their walking upon water, as "freely as upon dry land; of rivers drawn by "them from their natural courſe, and following them into a new chanel, which they "traced out to them. Of inundations of water "riſing up almoſt to the roofs of Churches, "without entering the doors of them, which "ſtood open: Of the arm of an Executioner, "fixed upright in the air, as it was lifted up, to "ſtrike off the head of one of thoſe holy men, "and reſtored by him on condition, that it "ſhould never again behead any Chriſtian: Of "veſſels of oil and wine miraculouſly repleniſhed; and of pieces of gold, as freſh as from the "mint, dropt from heaven into their laps:" with numberleſs other miracles, more trifling ſtill and deſpicable, contrived chiefly to advance *the honour of Monkery*; *the worſhip of Saints and of the bleſſed Virgin*; *the belief of a Purgatory*; *and the divine effects of Holy Water*, &c. [*l*].

[*k*] Vid. Gregor. Magn. Dial. l. i. c. 2, 10, 12. l. ii. 32. l. iii. 17, 33, &c.

[*l*] Ibid. l. ii. c. 7. l. iii. 9, 19, 37. l. i. 5, 9, 10. l. iv. 15, 16, 39, 40.

The apparent forgery of theſe miracles, and the confident atteſtation of them by *Gregory*, has induced many Proteſtants, and even ſome Papiſts alſo, to call in quæſtion the genuineneſs of theſe books: but the learned *Cave*, after duly weighing all the arguments, on the one ſide and the other, takes them to have been really written by *Gregory the Great*; *who indulged his credulity in them*, he ſays, *and gave more attention to fables, than he ought to have done, as all, who judge equitably and without prejudice, will eaſily allow* [m]. But theſe dialogues contain ſeveral miracles, ſaid to have been wrought in confutation of the *Arian Hereſy*; of which Dr. *Berriman* makes ſome uſe, in his elaborate defence of the *Athanaſian Doctrine*; where, ſpeaking of the objections, which have been made againſt the authority of the Dialogues, he takes occaſion to obſerve, *that as far as thoſe objections ariſe from the miraculouſneſs of the things related, he ſees not, why we ſhould diſpute the facts, unleſs it could be proved, as it certainly cannot, that miracles were then ceaſed* [n].

Thus the miraculous powers of the Church are expreſly avowed by him, to the end even of the ſixth century; in which Popery had gained a full eſtabliſhment: yet this Proteſtant Divine cannot conceive the leaſt reaſon to diſpute *the*

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[m] Hiſt. Litter. Vol. I. p. 543.

[n] See hiſtorical account of the Trinitarian Controverſy, Serm. vii. p. 356. not. q.

miraculouſneſs of thoſe facts which eſtabliſhed it; nay, defies any man to prove, *that miracles were yet ceaſed in this* Popiſh age.

In his accurate defence of that miracle of the fifth century, referred to above, amongſt his other teſtimonies, he mentions the authority of this ſame *Gregory the Great*, and of his contemporary, *Iſidore* of *Sevil*, *who had too much learning and judgement*, he ſays, *to be deceived in ſo important a fact* [o]. And ſince he thinks them infallible, in reporting a fact, which happened, as he owns, near *an hundred years* before, he has much more reaſon to think them ſo, in relating the facts of their own times: of which times, however, Dr. *Cave* gives us the following character, under that of *Evagrius*, the principal Hiſtorian of them, of whom he ſays, "that he "was agreeable enough in his ſtyle, and more "accurate in the orthodoxy of his doctrines, "than the other Hiſtorians, but too credulous, "and much addicted to fables, as it is manifeſt "to all, who are not blinded by their prejudi"ces, from the ſtories, which he relates on every "occaſion, concerning *the Croſs*, *and reliques*, "*and forged miracles*, to be in high eſteem in "thoſe days [p]." Yet neither the fabulous genius of this age, nor the incredibility of the miracles, ſaid to have been wrought in it; nor the impertinence, the abſurdity, nor the impiety, I may ſay, of the ends for which they were wrought, can ſhock the faith of Dr. *Berriman*; or raiſe any ſuſpicion of *the miraculouſneſs of facts*, affirmed by the *infallibility* of *Pope Gregory*.

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[o] See Berrim. ibid. p. 330. [p] Hiſt. Litterar. Vol. I. p. 547.

Since the zeal then of theſe Proteſtant Guides has now brought us within the very pale of the *Romiſh* Church, I ſee nothing, which can ſtop their progreſs, from the ſixth age down to the preſent: from *Pope Gregory the Great*, to *Pope Clement* the twelfth; the laſt of whom I perſonally knew, and believe to have been as honeſt and religious a Pontif, as the firſt. For each ſucceeding age will furniſh miracles, and witneſſes too, of as good credit as thoſe of the ſixth. The next ſupplies a *Venerable Bede*; whoſe very name carries authority; and whoſe learning, zeal, and purity of faith and manners, were celebrated through the Chriſtian world; yet whoſe works are filled with miracles, which no man of ſenſe can believe [q]. The eighth age yields a *Damaſcene*: *whoſe great knowledge and erudition in all the learned ſciences, nobody*, ſays *Cave*, *in his ſenſes can deny: yet he was monſtrouſly credulous, and, as the Popiſh writers themſelves allow, abounds with lies* [r]. And thus we may procede, thro' every following age, to find men of the ſame character; eminent for their learning, zeal, and piety; yet all of them ſtill carrying on the ſame frauds, down to *the Perrons*, *the Baronius's*, *the Bellarmines*, *and the Huetius's*, of theſe later times; whoſe names are full as venerable, and teſtimonies as credible, as any of the more ancient.

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[q] Vid. Bed. de Vita & miraculis Sancti Cuthbert. Op. Hiſtoric. Ed. Cantab. p. 229.

[r] Cave ibid. p. 624.

From theſe premiſes, it is evident, that the forged miracles of the fourth century, muſt neceſſarily taint the credit of all the later miracles, down even to the preſent age. For they depend as it were upon each other, as the parts of one uniform ſeries, or chain, ſo that where-ever we draw out a link, all the reſt which hang upon it, muſt of courſe fall to the ground. Let us conſider then, in the next place, what light the ſame forgeries will afford us, in looking backward alſo into the earlier ages, up to the times of the Apoſtles.

And firſt, when we reflect on that ſurprizing confidence and ſecurity, with which the principal Fathers of this fourth age have affirmed as true, what they themſelves had either forged or what they knew at leaſt to be forged; it is natural to ſuſpect, that ſo bold a defiance of ſacred truth could not be acquired, or become general at once, but muſt have been carried gradually to that height, by cuſtom, and the example of former times, and a long experience of what the credulity and ſuperſtition of the multitude would bear.

Secondly, this ſuſpicion will be ſtrengthened, by conſidering, that this age, in which Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed by the civil power, had no real occaſion for any miracles. For which reaſon, the learned among the Proteſtants have generally ſuppoſed it, to have been the very æra of their ceſſation: and for the ſame reaſon, the Fathers alſo themſelves, when they were diſpoſed to ſpeak the truth, have not ſcrupled to confeſs, *that the miraculous gifts were then actually withdrawn, becauſe the Church ſtood no longer in need of them* [s]. So that it muſt have been a raſh, and dangerous experiment, to begin to forge miracles, at a time when there was no particular temptation to it; if the uſe of ſuch fictions had not long been tried, and the benefit of them approved and recommended by their anceſtors: who wanted every help, towards ſupporting themſelves under the preſſures and perſecutions, with which the powers on earth were afflicting them.

Thirdly, if we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with thoſe of the earlier ages; we ſhall obſerve the ſame characters of zeal and piety in them all, but more learning, more judgement, and leſs credulity, in the later Fathers. If theſe then be found, either to have forged miracles themſelves; or to have propagated what they knew to be forged; or to have been deluded ſo far by other people's forgeries, as to take them for real miracles; (of the one or the other of which, they were all unqueſtionably guilty) it will naturally excite in us, the ſame ſuſpicion of their predeceſſors; who, in the ſame cauſe, and with the ſame zeal, were leſs learned, and more credulous, and in greater need of ſuch arts for their defence and ſecurity.

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[s] This will be particularly ſhewn in the courſe of my following argument.

Fourthly, as the perſonal characters of the earlier Fathers give them no advantage over their Succeſſors, ſo neither does the character of the earlier ages afford any real cauſe of preference, as to the point of their integrity, above the latter. The firſt indeed are generally called, and held to be *the pureſt:* but when they had once acquired that title, from the authority of a few leading men, it is not ſtrange, to find it aſcribed to them implicitly by every body elſe, without knowing or inquiring into the grounds of it. But whatever advantage of purity thoſe firſt ages may claim in ſome particular reſpects, it is certain, that they were defective in ſome others, above all, which have ſince ſucceeded them. For there never was any period of time in all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in which ſo many *rank Hereſies* were publicly profeſſed [*t*], nor in which ſo many *ſpurious books* were forged and publiſhed by the Chriſtians, under the names of Chriſt, and the Apoſtles, and the Apoſtolic writers, as in thoſe primitive ages: ſeveral of which forged books are frequently cited and applied to the defence of Chriſtianity, by the moſt eminent Fathers of the ſame ages, as true and genuin pieces, and of equal authority, with the Scriptures themſelves [u]. And no man ſurely can doubt, but that thoſe, who would either forge, or make uſe of forged books, would in the ſame cauſe, and for the ſame ends, make uſe of forged miracles.

[*t*] The learned, I think, have reckoned about ninety different Hereſies, which all ſprang up within the three firſt centuries.

But the true character of theſe ages may beſt be learnt from one, who lived in the very midſt of them, and was himſelf the chief ornament of them, I mean St. *Cyprian*, who has left us the following account of the ſtate of the Church, juſt before the *Decian* perſecution, about *A. D.*

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[u] See Archbiſhop *Wake's* Preliminary Diſcourſe to the Genuin Epiſtles of the Apoſtolic Fathers, p. 89. where he has given us a liſt of a great part of thoſe ſpurious pieces, with a ſhort account of each,—in which he tells us, *that it would be endleſs to inſiſt on all the ſpurious pieces, which were attributed onely to St. Paul; but that the ſuperſtitious books, aſcribed to St. Peter,* viz. his Acts, his Goſpel, his Preaching, his Revelations, *were of much greater authority even to the times of Euſebius.* [§ 18, 19.] He obſerves, alſo, that the book called *the Recognitions of St. Clement*, which he takes to be *the moſt learned, as well as the moſt ancient of any of thoſe pieces, was not ſet forth till about the middle of the ſecond Century, and is rejected by Euſebius, as one of thoſe many impoſtures, which were even then publiſhed under the name of that Saint.* § 28.

250, when its diſcipline, as he ſays, was corrupted, and its faith almoſt loſt, by the long eaſe and peace, which it had then enjoyed, for near forty years; during which interval, he tells us, "that the body of Chriſtians ſtudied nothing, but how to increaſe their patrimony: "and forgetting what the faithful had done, either in the times of the Apoſtles, or what they "ought to do at all times, had no other paſſion, "but an inſatiable ardor of inlarging their fortunes. That there was no true devotion in "the prieſts, no ſound faith in the miniſters: "no mercy in their works, no diſcipline in their "manners: that the men deſtroyed the comelineſs of their beards, and women of their "faces, by paint and falſe arts: their eyes alſo, "ſo finiſhed by the hand of God, were adulterated; and their hair ſtained with colors, "not their own. That the ſimple were deluded, and the brethren circumvented by craft "and fraud. That it was common, to contract "marriages with unbelievers: and to proſtitute "the members of Chriſt to the Gentiles: and "to ſwear not onely raſhly, but falſely: to contemn their rulers with an inſolent pride; to "ſpeak againſt them with ſpite and rancour; "and to quarrel among themſelves with an obſtinate hatred. That great numbers of the "Biſhops, who ought to be an example and "leſſon to the reſt, contemning their divine "Stewardſhip, made themſelves the ſtewards of "ſecular affairs; rambling about into other "people's provinces; and ſeeking out the markets of traffic and gain; and inſtead of relieving their hungry brethren in the Church, "were eager onely to heap up money; to ſeize "people's lands by treachery and fraud; and to "increaſe their ſtock by exorbitant uſury [x]."

This is the picture of thoſe ages, which people affect to call the *pureſt*, as it was drawn from the life, by the ableſt maſter of the times, which he deſcribes: and though the character of the drawer muſt oblige us to believe, that it bore a great likeneſs to the original, yet it is ſo far from giving us any idea of purity or perfection, that if it had been drawn, even for our own times, we might juſtly think the coloring too coarſe, and the features charged beyond the truth.

Now from all theſe conſiderations taken together, it muſt, I think, be allowed, that the forged miracles of the fourth century give us juſt reaſon to ſuſpect the pretenſions of every other age both before and after it. My argument would be much the ſame, if it were grounded on the allowed forgeries of any later age. Dr. *Chapman*, who defends the miracles of the fifth century, declares *that there were ſome of theſe later inſtances, as public, as clear, and as well atteſted, as any in the earlier ages; and by an evidence, equal to that, by which moſt of the ancient*

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[x] De Lapſis, p. 170. Ed. Rigalt.

miracles are ſupported [y]. Dr. *Berriman*, in his defence of a particular miracle, near the end of the ſame century, inſiſts, *that it cannot be diſcredited, without* ſhaking the whole faith of Hiſtory, and *rejecting all accounts of miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures* [z]. And ſo far I agree with them both, and own their defence to be true; that the earlier miracles reſt on no better foundation, nor are ſupported by any better evidence, than the later. But then, if theſe later, after all the confidence of their Advocates, may certainly be diſcredited, and muſt conſequently be rejected; it follows from their own principles, that the earlier may, with as much reaſon, be rejected too. Which brings me at laſt to that general concluſion, which I have undertaken to illuſtrate; *that there is no ſufficient reaſon to believe, from the teſtimony of antiquity, that any miraculous powers did ever actually ſubſiſt in any age of the Church, after the times of the Apoſtles.*

But this will be the proper buſineſs of the ſubſequent Treatiſe, in which, I ſhall endeavour to evince, by particular facts and teſtimonies, what this general view of the quæſtion, here given, and the reflections naturally ariſing from it, would previouſly diſpoſe us to ſuſpect; that the pretended miracles of the primitive Church were all mere fictions; which the pious and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak credulity, and partly from reaſons of policy; believing ſome perhaps to be true, and knowing all of them to be uſeful, were induced to eſpouſe and propagate, for the ſupport of a righteous cauſe.

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[y] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 170, 175.

[z] Serm. p. 327.

I have already obſerved, that many ſpurious books were forged in the earlieſt times of the Church, in the Names of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which paſſed upon all the Fathers, as genuin and divine through ſeveral ſucceſſive ages. Now as the high authority of the Apoſtolic writings, and the zeal, with which they were ſought for by all Churches, was the motive, without doubt, which excited ſome of the ableſt, and moſt learned of the Chriſtians, to take the pains of forging and vending ſuch books under thoſe falſe titles; ſo the great fame and ſucceſs of the Apoſtolic miracles, would naturally excite ſome alſo of the moſt crafty, when the Apoſtles themſelves were dead, to attempt ſome juggling tricks in imitation of them, and by the pretence of a divine power, to impoſe upon that *ſimplicity and credulity*, which diſtinguiſhed the character of thoſe early ages. And [a] when theſe artful

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[a] The Primitive Chriſtians were perpetually reproached for their groſs *credulity* by all their enemies. *Celſus* ſays, that they *cared neither to receive, nor to give any reaſon of their faith*, and that it was an uſual ſaying with them, *do not examine, but believe onely, and thy faith will ſave thee*. *Julian* affirms, *that the ſum of all their wiſdom was comprized in this ſingle precept, Believe*. The Gentiles, ſays *Arnobius*, make it their conſtant buſineſs *to laugh at our faith, and to laſh our credulity with their facetious jokes*. Orig. con. Celſ. l. i. p. 8, 9. Greg. Nazian. Invect. i. Arnob. l. ii. p. 22, 23.

The Fathers, on the other

pretenders, by inſinuating themſelves chiefly in private houſes, or among the ignorant populace, had been able to maintain their ground through the three firſt centuries, the leading Clergy of the fourth, who were then eſtabliſhed by the civil power, and at liberty to apply all arts without reſerve to the converſion of the Heathens, underſtood their intereſt too well, to part with the old plea of miraculous gifts, which had been found ſo effectual, to dazzle the ſenſes and poſſeſs the minds of the multitude.

This ſeems to have been the general ſtate of the caſe in quæſtion: and though it may ſhock the prejudices of many, and claſh with the ſyſtems which are commonly entertained; yet it will be found, I dare ſay, to be true, or at leaſt the moſt probable; and, as ſuch, the moſt uſeful alſo, to the real Defence of the Chriſtian cauſe. For, as far as miracles can evince the divinity of a religion, the pretenſions of Chriſtianity are confirmed by the evidence of ſuch, as of all others on record, are the leaſt liable to exception, and carry the cleareſt marks of their ſincerity;

hand, defend themſelves by ſaying, that they did nothing more on this occaſion, than what the Philoſophers had always done; that *Pythagoras's* precepts were inculcated by an *Ipſe dixit*, and that they had found the ſame method uſeful with the vulgar, who were not at leiſure to examine things; whom they taught therefore *to believe, even without reaſons:* and that the Heathens themſelves, tho' they did not confeſs it in words, yet practiſed the ſame in their acts. *Ibid.*

ſincerity; being wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, for an end ſo great, ſo important, and ſo univerſally beneficial, as to be highly worthy of the interpoſition of the Deity; and wrought by the miniſtry of mean and ſimple men, in the open view of the people, as the teſtimonial of that divine miſſion to which they pretended; and delivered to us by eye-witneſſes, whoſe honeſt characters exclude the ſuſpicion of fraud, and whoſe knowledge of the facts, which they relate, ſcarce admits the probability of a miſtake. This is the genuin ground on which Chriſtianity reſts; the hiſtory of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles, as it is declared and comprized within the canon of the Holy Scriptures. Whenever we go beyond this, we weaken its foundation, by endeavouring to inlarge it; and by recurring to an evidence leſs ſtrong and of doubtful credit, take pains onely to render a good cauſe ſuſpected, and expoſe it to the perpetual ridicule of the Sceptics and Freethinkers.

Should our Infidels then be diſpoſed, to make themſelves merry with the miracles of a *Symeon Stylites*, or any other crack'd-brain monk of the 4th or 5th century, there is no reaſon for Dr. *Chapman* to be ſo angry with them [b]: let us ſuffer them to laugh on, and even laugh with them ourſelves; and by throwing out an empty tub to their ſport, ſecure the veſſel itſelf from their attacks. Or ſhould the Romaniſts, on the other hand, pretend to urge us with their miracles, and to ſhew the ſucceſſion of them from the earlieſt ages, we have no reaſon to be moved at it, but may tell them without ſcruple, that we admit no miracles but thoſe of the Scriptures; and that all the reſt are either juſtly ſuſpected or certainly forged. By putting the controverſy on this iſſue, we ſhall either diſarm them at once, or, if they perſiſt in the diſpute, may be ſure to convict them of fraud and impoſture: whereas by granting them but a ſingle age of miracles, after the times of the Apoſtles, we ſhall be entangled in a ſeries of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourſelves, till we allow the ſame powers alſo to the preſent age.

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[b] This *Symeon* (who acquired the name of *Stylites*, by a moſt extravagant whim which he took, of ſpending the beſt part of his life on the top of a pillar, ſix and thirty cubits high) was a mad enthuſiaſtic Monk of the 5th Century, to whom many monſtrous and ſuperſtitious

And in truth, it has always been conſidered, as a fundamental principle of the Reformation, *that the Scriptures are a compleat rule both of faith and manners; and as ſuch are clear alſo and intelligible, in all fundamental points, to every private Chriſtian.* In this, all Proteſtant Churches agree, how much ſoever they may differ in any other

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acts are aſcribed, by the Eccleſiaſtical writers, as the effects of a divine inſpiration: all which Dr. *Chapman* moſt ſtrenuouſly and zealouſly defends, againſt the raillery of the Author of Chriſtianity as old as the Creation. See his Miſcell. Tracts, p. 165. § 111.

article: and if this be true, then whatever be the characters of the ancient Fathers, or whatever they may have taught, and practiſed in any age of the Church, is a matter wholly indifferent, and makes no part in the religion of a Proteſtant: and conſequently, no difference of judgement with regard to thoſe Fathers, ought to give any cauſe of offence or hatred among the members of that communion. For if the Scriptures are ſufficient, we do not want them as guides; or if clear, as interpreters. Every one therefore may enjoy his opinion of them, with the ſame liberty, as of any other writers whatſoever, with this caution onely, that an eſteem of them is apt to carry us too far, and has actually carried many into great and dangerous errors: whereas the neglect of them cannot be attended with any ill conſequence, ſince the Scriptures teach every thing that is neceſſary, either to be believed or practiſed.

I cannot illuſtrate this principle ſo effectually, as by the following words of the excellent *Chillingworth*, who, of all men, beſt underſtood the real grounds of the controverſy, between the Proteſtants and the Papiſts.

"The Bible, I ſay, the Bible onely, is the re-
" ligion of Proteſtants. Whatſoever elſe they
" believe beſides it, and the plain, irrefragable,
" and indubitable conſequences of it, well may
" they hold it, as a matter of opinions, but as

" matter of faith and religion, neither can they,
" with coherence to their own grounds, believe
" it themſelves, nor require the belief of it of
" others, without moſt high and moſt ſchiſmati-
" cal preſumption. I, for my part, after a long,
" and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial
" ſearch of the *true way to eternal happineſs*, do
" profeſs plainly, that I cannot find any reſt for
" the ſole of my foot, but on this rock onely.
" I ſee plainly, and with my own eyes, that
" there are Popes againſt Popes; Councils
" againſt Councils; ſome Fathers againſt others;
" the ſame Fathers againſt themſelves; a con-
" ſent of Fathers of one age, againſt the conſent
of Fathers of another age; the Church of one
" age againſt the Church of another age: Tra-
" ditive interpretations of Scripture are pretend-
" ed, but there are none to be found. No tra-
" dition, but onely of Scripture, can derive it-
" ſelf from the fountain, but may be plainly
" proved, either to have been brought in, in
" ſuch an age after Chriſt, or that in ſuch an
" age, it was not in. In a word, there is no ſuf-
" ficient certainty, but of Scripture onely, for
" any conſiderate man to build upon," &c.

But though this doctrine of the ſufficiency of the Scriptures be generally profeſſed through all the reformed Churches, yet it has happened, I know not how, in our own, that its Divines have been apt, on all occaſions, to join the authority of the primitive Church to that of ſacred writ; to ſupply doctrines from the ancient

Councils, in which the Scriptures are either ſilent or thought defective; to add the Holy Fathers to the College of the Apoſtles; and by aſcribing the ſame gifts and powers to them both, to advance the primitive traditions, to a parity with Apoſtolic precepts.

Thus the late Dr. *Waterland*, who was ſuppoſed to ſpeak the ſenſe of our preſent Rulers, ſeldom appeals to the Scriptures in his controverſial writings, without joining antiquity to them, or the authority *of the three firſt centuries at leaſt*, that *golden age of Chriſtianity*, as he calls it [*c*]. He declares, "that the true interpretation of "Scripture cannot run counter, in things fun"damental, to the judgement of the firſt and "pureſt ages: that to depreciate the value of "Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity, and to throw con"tempt on the primitive Fathers, is to wound "Chriſtianity through their ſides [*d*]: and that "Chriſt never ſits ſo ſecure and eaſy on his "throne, as with theſe faithful guards about "him [*e*]:" and he concludes his elaborate treatiſe on *the uſe and value of Antiquity*, in theſe words:

"The ſum of what I have been endeavouring "through this whole chapter, is, that Scripture "and Antiquity (under the conduct of right "reaſon) are what we ought to abide by, in

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[*c*] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426. [*d*] Ibid. p. 395. [*e*] Ibid. 396.

" ſettling points of doctrine, I have not put the " caſe of Scripture and Antiquity interfering, " or claſhing with each other; becauſe it is a " caſe, which will never appear in points of " importance, ſuch as this is, which we are now " upon. However, as to the general caſe, we " may ſay, that thoſe two ought always to go " together, and to concide with each other: " and when they do ſo, they ſtand the firmer in " their united ſtrength: but if ever they claſh, " or appear to claſh, then undoubtedly there is " an error ſomewhere, like as when two ac" countants vary in caſting up the ſame ſum, " *&c.* [*f*]."

Here we ſee Antiquity joined as a neceſſary and inſeparable companion to the Scripture, and put even upon a level with it, by this eminent Advocate of the Chriſtian Faith. But ſince this ſeems to be a flat contradiction to the principles of the Reformation, and dangerous to the general credit and intereſts of the Proteſtant religion, it may be worth while to conſider a little, from what particular motives and circumſtances, ſo inconſiſtent a practice ſhould happen to prevail more remarkably in this, than in any other Proteſtant Church.

Our firſt and principal Reformers, in the reign of *Henry the VIIIth*, had not the power to carry the Reformation ſo far, as they deſired; nor to make ſuch changes in the old worſhip, as put them under a neceſſity of diſcarding the authority of the primitive Fathers; but, on the contrary, were obliged againſt their wills, to comply ſtill with many rites and doctrines, which had no other foundation, but in that authority; which therefore, in thoſe circumſtances, they were forced to aſſert and defend. For how much ſoever they might be diſpoſed, to aboliſh ſuch rites, and the authority too, on which they ſtood, they were reſtrained by the will of an arbitrary Prince, who would not ſuffer them, to take the leaſt ſtep but by his immediate direction, and from his high conceit of his Theological learning, gave the law even to his Biſhops, in all the religious diſputes of thoſe days; and whoſe chief view after all was, to baniſh rather the power, than the religion of the Pope, out of his realm.

[*f*] Ibid. p. 465.

In the next reign of *Edward the Sixth*, tho' the ſame reforming Biſhops found themſelves at liberty, to carry on their great work to its full perfection, yet for the ſake, either of their former conduct, and prejudices; or to preſerve a character of conſtancy; and to give the leſs ſcandal to the Clergy, who ſtill generally favoured the old forms; they endeavoured, as far as they were able, tho' ſometimes by forced and unnaral conſtructions, to juſtify all their proceedings by the example and uſages of the ancient Fathers.

On the acceſſion therefore of Queen *Mary*, and the ſad cataſtrophe, which enſued, when the ſame Reformers, now doomed to be Martyrs, and eſpecially *Cranmer* and *Ridley* (two Fathers of the Proteſtant Church, as truly venerable, as Chriſtianity perhaps has to boaſt of, ſince the times of the Apoſtles;) when theſe, I ſay, were brought out of their priſons, on pretence of holding public diſputations, but in truth, to be expoſed onely to the ſcoffs and contumelies of their cruel enemies; and when they had ſolidly evinced the truth of their doctrines, and baffled all the ſophiſtry of their opponents, by the clear and unanſwerable teſtimonies of the Scriptures, it grieves us after all, to ſee them labouring and gravelled, at a paſſage of *Chryſoſtom*, or *Ambroſe*, or *Hilary*, &c; and giving their adverſaries an occaſion of triumph, by ſubmitting to an authority, which was nothing to the purpoſe, and which in thoſe unhappy circumſtances, they were neither at liberty to reject, nor yet able to reconcile to their cauſe.

Queen *Elizabeth*, who next ſucceded, and finally eſtabliſhed the Reformation, affected to retain more pomp and ſplendor in the external part of religion, than many of her chief Divines approved; who, in compliance however with her humour, ſubmitted to ſeveral things, which they hoped in time to get rid of [g]. Her view was, to moderate the prejudices of the Popiſh Clergy; and to reconcile them by degrees to the new ſettlement, by leaving in it an outward ſhew, and ſome reſemblance of the old. From the ſame principle, a reverence was ſtill kept up to Antiquity; and appeals made on both ſides, to the primitive Fathers and ancient Councils, by the Profeſſors of the new, as well as of the old doctrines: which practice has been followed ever ſince, by the greateſt part of our leading Churchmen. But from the little ſucceſs which it has had, or ever can have, in our controverſies with the Papiſts, it is evident, that it cannot be conſidered in any other light, but as a vain oſtentation of learning, and an impatient zeal, to repel that charge of ignorance and contempt of primitive Antiquity, with which the

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[g] In the Preamble of the Will of *Edw. Sandys*, Archbiſhop of *York*, who died *A. D.* 1588. there is the following paſſage relating to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, as they were then ſettled by public Authority.

"I am perſuaded, that ſuch, as are now ſet down by public Authority— are no way either ungodly or unlawful, but may with good conſcience, for order and obedience ſake be uſed.—So I have ever been perſuaded, that ſome of them be not ſo expedient for this Church, but that they may better be diſuſed by little and little, than more and more urged. As I do eaſily acknowledge, that our Eccleſiaſtical polity may in ſome points be bettered—So I do utterly diſlike all ſuch rude platforms, *&c.*"

Proteſtant Churches are conſtantly reproached by the Romaniſts.

In the two following reigns, the Popiſh intereſt began to raiſe its head again in *England*. *James* the Firſt was a mere School-Divine, fond of theological diſputes; and though he wrote againſt the Papiſts, yet *being afraid of them*, as Biſhop *Burnet* ſays, *always acted for them* [h]. And *Charles the Firſt's* Queen, who was a zealot to that religion, uſed all her power with the King, which was very great, to ſupport and propagate its credit in the Kingdom, and to ſuſpend the rigor of the laws againſt it. "By the King's "connivence, ſays the learned Dr. *Heylin*, and "the Queen's indulgence, the Popiſh faction "gathered not onely ſtrength, but confidence; "multiplying in ſome numbers about the "Court, and reſorting in a more open manner "to the Maſſes at *Somerſet* Houſe; where the "*Capuchins* had obtained a Chapel and Con-"vent [i]." The leading Churchmen alſo, from a compliance with the principles of the Court, and an abhorrence of thoſe of the Puritans, ſeemed to have formed that ſenſeleſs project of a reconciliation with *Rome*, and made conſiderable advances towards it, by giving ſuch an interpretation to the doctrines and form to the diſcipline of our Church, as might invite all moderate Papiſts, to join with them in its communion. But this compliance had no other effect, nor ever can have, than to weaken the Proteſtant cauſe, and to furniſh its enemies with the greater power and means to oppreſs it. Nor did they fail to make their full advantage of it; by repreſenting it, "as a proof of the fickle and "unſettled ſtate of the *Engliſh* Church, that it "was grown ſick, as it were, and weary of itſelf, "and could find no reſt in the novelties, which "it had embraced, but was returning apace to "its old principles, and reſuming many of the "rites and doctrines, for which it had forſaken "the Church of *Rome*." All this was urged with great force againſt our *Chillingworth*, by that ſubtil Jeſuit, Mr. *Knot*; and exemplified by him in many particulars, which the learned Dr. *Heylin*, who was perfectly acquainted with the eccleſiaſtical principles of that age, and a ſtrenuous eſpouſer of them, declares to be true, in the following words, drawn from his Life of *Archbiſhop Laud*.

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[h] See Biſhop *Burnet's* Hiſtory of his Times, Vol. i. p. 11, 12.

[i] See Life of Archbiſhop *Laud* by Dr. *Pet. Heylin*, Par. ii. l. iv. p. 337.

"If you will take the character of the Church "of *England*, ſays he, from the pen of a Jeſuit, "you ſhall find him ſpeaking, among other "falſehoods, theſe undoubted truths; *viz.* that "the Profeſſors of it, they eſpecially of greateſt "worth, learning, and authority, love temper "and moderation; that the doctrines are altered in many Things; as for example, The "Pope not Antichriſt; Pictures, free-will, pre-

“deſtination, univerſal grace, inherent righteouſneſs; the preferring of charity before knowledge; the merit, or reward rather of good works; the thirty nine articles ſeeming patient, if not ambitious alſo of ſome catholic ſenſe; that their Churches begin to look with a new face; their walls to ſpeak a new language; and ſome of their Divines to teach, that the Church hath authority in determining controverſies of faith, and interpreting the Scriptures; that men, in talk and writing, uſe willingly the once fearful names of Prieſts and Altars, and are now put in mind, that for the expoſition of Scripture, they *are by Canon bound to follow the Fathers.*—So far the Jeſuit, ſays he, may be thought to ſpeak nothing but truth [k].”

It is needleſs to deſcend to the later reigns; or to obſerve, how far the diſcipline and principles of *Archbiſhop Laud* were adopted again at the Reſtoration; or what credit they ſtill obtain with ſome of the principal Clergy of our own times; ſince this can hardly eſcape the notice of all, who pay any attention to Eccleſiaſtical affairs. But there is another circumſtance, that I muſt not omit to mention, as it is peculiar to our Church, and from Queen *Elizabeth's* time down to our own, has had no ſmall influence on its principles and practice, and which will always keep up amongſt us a full reſpect to Eccleſiaſtical antiquity. I mean thoſe unhappy diſſenſions among the Proteſtants of this nation, which have ſplit them into different ſects and ſeparate communions. For in theſe diſputes, which wholly turn on points of diſcipline, and external forms of worſhip, as the authority of the Fathers, whatever weight it ought to have is moſtly on the ſide of the eſtabliſhed Church, ſo the Church will always be diſpoſed to ſupport that authority, which helps it to depreſs a ſet of men, who, though agreeing with it in eſſentials, and diſſenting only about things indifferent, are yet more odious, than the Papiſts themſelves, to all the zealous advocates, and warm admirers of the primitive Fathers.

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[k] See Ibid. p. 238. and the Life alſo of M. *Chillingworth* by Monſieur Des Maizeaux, p. 113. Not. (AA.)

Theſe ſeem to have been the chief reaſons, which from the time even of our reformation, have advanced the credit of Eccleſiaſtical antiquity to an higher pitch in this kingdom, than in any other Proteſtant country. Which ſame principles, by the encouragement which they have generally received from our Governors, are now carried, as we have ſeen, to an heighth, that muſt needs alarm all ſerious Proteſtants, as they have no other tendency, nor can have any other effect, but to throw us again into the arms of the *Romiſh* Church. For I have long been of opinion, that the ſucceſs, which their Miſſionaries have ever found in this iſland, and which of late has been more particularly complained of, is chiefly owing, to thoſe high notions of the primitive diſcipline, and that great reverence for the ancient Fathers, which are entertained and propagated by a great part of our Clergy. For by agreeing with the Romaniſts thus far, and joining with them in a common appeal to primitive antiquity, we allow all, which they can fairly draw from it, to be ſound and orthodox; and though in the end, they may not perhaps gain every thing, which they aim at, yet they will be ſure always, to come off with great advantage.

Mr. *Chillingworth* himſelf is a memorable example of this truth: who, in his account of the ſeveral motives, which induced him to embrace the *Romiſh* faith, mentions the two following;

" Becauſe, if any credit may be given to as
" creditable records, as any are extant, the doc-
" trine of Catholics hath been frequently con-
" firmed, and the oppoſite doctrine of Pro-
" teſtants confounded, with ſupernatural and di-
" vine miracles.

" Becauſe the doctrine of the church of *Rome*
" is conformable, and the doctrine of Proteſtants
" contrary, to the doctrine of the Fathers, even
" by the confeſſion of Proteſtants themſelves:
" I mean thoſe Fathers, who lived within the
" compaſs of the firſt ſix hundred years; to
" whom

“ whom Proteſtants do very frequently and very
“ confidently appeal [l].”

Theſe ſeem to have been the principal arguments, which abuſed this great man, as he expreſſes it, and hurried him into the Church of *Rome*. *Silly Sophiſms*, as he afterwards calls them, *grounded on miſtakes and falſe ſuppoſitions, which he unadviſedly took for granted* [m]. Till upon a clear view of the errors, into which they had drawn him, he perceived, that the means could not be pure, when the end was ſo corrupt, and found no other way of retrieving his miſtake, and becoming Proteſtant again, but by diſcarding thoſe fallacious records, and fictitious miracles, which had ſeduced him, and committing himſelf to the ſole guidance, and infallible authority of the holy Scriptures. On this foundation, he has built the moſt ſolid and rational defence of the Proteſtant cauſe, which has ever been offered to the public ſince the Reformation. Yet our Champions of theſe days are employing all their ſkill, to demoliſh what he had built, and to adopt again into the ſyſtem of our faith, all that he had thrown out of it; all the nonſenſe, the ſuperſtition, and the pious frauds of the primitive ages; nor will they allow us even to be Chriſtians, but on thoſe very principles, which muſt finally make us Papiſts.

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[l] See Pref. to Charity maintained, § 43. in *Chillingworth's* Works, ſeventh Edition.

[m] See Ibid. § 42.

The deſign of the preſent treatiſe, is to give ſome check to the current of this zeal, and to fix the religion of Proteſtants on its proper baſis, that is, on the ſacred Scriptures; not on the authority of weak and fallible men, the detection of whoſe errors, and the ſuſpicion of whoſe frauds, would neceſſarily give a wound to Chriſtianity itſelf; which yet in reality, is no more concerned or affected by the characters of the antient, than of the modern Fathers of the Church. But to declare my opinion in ſhort on the real value of thoſe primitive writers, I freely own them to be of ſome uſe and ſervice on ſeveral accounts.

Firſt, In atteſting and tranſmitting to us the genuin books of the holy Scriptures. Yet this is not owing to any particular ſanctity or ſagacity of thoſe antient times, but to the notoriety of the thing, and the authority with which the books themſelves were received from their firſt publication, in all Churches: whence they have ſince been handed down to us, in the ſame manner, as the works of all other antient writers, by the perpetual tradition of ſucceſſive ages, whether pure or corrupt, learned or unlearned.

2dly, Their more immediate and proper uſe, is, to teach us the doctrines, the rites, the manners, and the learning of the ſeveral ages, in which they lived: yet as witneſſes onely, not as guides: as declaring, what was then believed, not what was true; what was practiſed, not what ought to be practiſed: ſince their works abound with inſtances of fooliſh, falſe, and dangerous opinions, univerſally maintained and zealouſly propagated by them all.

Laſtly, Their very errors alſo afford an uſe and profitable leſſon to us: for the many corruptions, which crept into the Church in thoſe very early ages, are a ſtanding proof and admonition to all the later ages, that there is no way of preſerving a purity of faith and worſhip in any Church, but by reviewing them from time to time, and reducing them to the original teſt and ſtandard of the holy Scriptures.

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER I had finiſhed this Introductory treatiſe, and was preparing to ſend it to the preſs, I happened to meet with an Archidiaconal Charge, delivered to the Clergy at a viſitation, by the ſame learned Dr. *Chapman*, whom I have had frequent occaſion to mention, in the courſe of my argument. And ſince this Charge is a of a ſingular kind, and bears ſome relation to the ſubject of the preſent inquiry, with regard both to *Popery* and *Primitive Antiquity*, the reader, I hope, will excuſe me, if I detain him here a while, with a few ſhort remarks upon it.

The Archdeacon enters directly into the matter of his ſpeech; and inſtead of congratulating with his reverend brethren, on their deliverance from the *late rebellion*, drops but a ſlight hint on that, as the prelude onely to *another plot*, of a more dreadful and fatal kind which he is in haſt to communicate; the laſt effort of *ſubtil Jeſuits, who ſeeing every other method baffled and ineffectual, reſolved to try a new, though bold expedient for their Church*; *more big*, he ſays, *with peſt and confuſion, than all the former devices of their party againſt us*; *ſtriking deciſively at the very root of the Reformation, and at the baſis of all pro-*

teſtant Churches; *and ſecretly working, at this very time, incredible miſchief againſt our whole religion*[a]. Then as to *the Leader in this Plot*, he deſcribes him like another *Catiline*; *furniſhed with every great talent, proper for the purpoſe*; *an head acute and prolific*; *learning extenſive and various*; *language dogmatical and lively*; *a zeal never deſtitute of addreſs, and length of days, attending conſtant ſtudies and vivacity of genius*: in ſhort, with every art, to draw every creature; Papiſt and Proteſtant; zealot and freethinker, into his ſcheme [b].

After ſuch an exordium, one cannot help figuring to himſelf what a ſurprize, ſo ſtrange a piece of news muſt needs excite in this reverend Aſſembly, to find themſelves expoſed again ſo unexpectedly, to the effects of ſo direful a conſpiracy; and what an impatience it would create, to hear the reſt, and to learn, by what arts and inſtruments, this calamity was to be brought upon them; which the Archdeacon procedes to diſcloſe in the following manner:

That *there were certain Loyolites in* France, *who had aſſumed of a ſudden a new character, and blazed out moſt faſtidious Hypercritics*: that theſe had entered into a vow, to deprive us of all our learning and religion at once, and *by one deſperate furious puſh, to ſtab the proteſtant cauſe to the heart, with the admired ſpirit of incredulity and*

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[a] See pag. 1, 2, 3. [b] Pag. 11, 12, 18. &c.

freethinking: that their method of doing it was; to make all the world believe, that *the ancient writers of* Greece *and* Rome, *were either figments, or worthleſs triflers*; *and by that means, to confound and diſſipate all our notions in Chronology, Hiſtory, Laws, uſages, doctrines eccleſiaſtical and prophane, together with the genius and vitals of all the dead languages:* that, in the execution of this deſign, they had already gone ſo far, *as to reproach* Thucydides *and* Xenophon *very tartly, with modern Galliciſms and ſuſpicious phraſeologies*; *and had ſuperciliouſly laſhed all the reſt*; Diodorus, Polybius, Dionyſius *of* Halicarnaſſus, Livy, Juſtin, Suetonius, Quintilian, Tacitus, Plutarch, Athenæus, Dion Caſſius, *with multitudes of others, as mere counterfeit Romances*; *the works of recent Sophiſts, Impoſtors, and Fabulators* [*c*].

And leſt any one ſhould interrupt him here, and aſk; how *the proteſtant cauſe could be ruined and our whole religion overturned*, by the loſs onely of theſe *Pagan writers*, he clears up that doubt in the following words, by declaring; that this blow, *how daring ſoever, was but the introduction to the fatal ſtroke, which was to inſue*; *for that the* Clements, *the* Chryſoſtoms, *the* Jeroms, *and the* Auſtins, *were to fall the next in this maſſacre*; *and the ancient Councils themſelves, both general and provincial, would not long ſurvive them* [*d*].

[*c*] See pag. 3, 4, 5.

[*d*] Page 6.

This is the ſubſtance of his plot, as it is ſet forth by himſelf. For if we *could penetrate the very marrow*, as he ſays, or, in a metaphor ſtill more elegant, *the very vitals of the dead languages themſelves*, we could not find any words, ſo well ſuited to his ſubject, or ſo adapted, to ſpread wonder and amazement thro' an Aſſembly, as his own. As to the ſucceſs of the plot, he repreſents it every where, as moſt eaſy and probable. For the Papiſts would favour it of courſe, as it could not fail of reducing all Chriſtendom under the abſolute power of *Rome*; and *the Proteſtants, among whom a fantaſtical paſſion for novelties, and a briſk giddy ſpirit of Pyrrhoniſm was riſing very faſt* [e], *would rejoice at any blow given to eccleſiaſtical hiſtory and the Scriptures, and readily give up even their favourite* Virgils *and* Horaces, *&c. on condition only, that the* Jeroms *might be ſacrificed at the ſame time* [f].

Now whatever ſurprize the firſt opening of this ſpeech might give, either to the hearer or reader, the concluſion, I dare ſay, will give as great, to find *this crafty projection*, as he calls it, which he has been dreſſing up with ſuch ſolemnity and laboured pomp of words, as a moſt deſperate plot of the Romiſh Church, to be nothing at laſt but the ſtale and ſenſeleſs whim of a ſingle old Jeſuit, formed by no concert or confederacy with any ſet of men in the world, and publiſhed about forty years ago without any other effect whatſoever, than of being laughed at ever ſince by all men of ſenſe, and particularly contemned at *Rome*, as I have been certainly informed, as the mere delirium of a doting Critic.

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[e] See page 12. [f] Pag. 22, 23.

One would not eaſily conceive, at the firſt thought, what ſhould put it into this Archdeacon's head, to think of alarming the Provincial Clergy, at this time of day, with the vain terrors of ſuch an exploded and obſolete tale. But this ſcheme was artfully laid, and the time exactly hit by him. He ſaw, that a *Panic* was ſpread over the land; that people's heads were filled with nothing, but conſpiracies and Popiſh invaſions; that this was the moment, to make a figure with his plot, and if the diſcovery was poſtponed, the merit of it would be loſt. *He ſtruck in roundly* therefore, as he expreſſes it, *and like a true man of craft, with this taſte and turn of the age* [g]; and ſnatched the opportunity of diſplaying his abilities before his reverend brethren, and while he was rouſing all their fears, of adminiſtering comfort to them at the ſame time, by ſhewing; what a champion they had got to defend them; that the old Jeſuit himſelf could not outdo him, in thoſe very talents of his, which he had been enumerating; *the acuteneſs of his prolific head*; *the extent of his various learning*; *the force of his dogmatical language*: and that the

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[g] See pag. 12.

Freethinkers were nothing to him, even in their own arts, and the management of thoſe *everlaſting arms of theirs* in which their ſtrength lay; *the alertneſs of their ſneers*; *their affectation of appearing ſignificant in erudition, and their fluent pompous ſhew of ſome depth in letters* [*h*].

But ſurely, no *Archidiaconal Charge* was ever more learnedly trifling, or pompouſly abſurd than this. He confeſſes, that this conceit of the Jeſuit raiſed ſo general *an outcry againſt it, among the Papiſts themſelves, that he was obliged to recant it, as ſoon almoſt as it was divulged*; *that his own Society of the Jeſuits publiſhed a formal proteſtation againſt it* [*i*]; *and that the learned of all the other Orders both in* France *and* Italy, *ſharply declared their abhorrence of it* [*k*]. Yet this deſpicable project of a cloiſtered viſionary, conceived ſo many years ago, retracted by himſelf, cenſured by his own Order, and abhorred by all the other Orders of *France* and *Italy*, is here puffed and dreſſed out by our Archdeacon, in an Aſſembly of Engliſh Clergy, as a moſt dreadful plot, ſpreading its infection far and wide, threatening ruin to our whole religion, *fire and ſword to all Proteſtants* [*l*].

In opening the evidences of this plot, he declares from his own knowledge, *that it was certainly begun, and is carried on to this day, with art*

[*h*] See pag. 22, 23. [*i*] (Note †). [*k*] Pag. 20.

[*l*] Pag. ibid.

and ſucceſs; *and is aſſiſted alſo by a favourable concurrence of circumſtances in this very age* [*m*]*: that one great man in* France *had loudly proclamed a very high eſteem for the author: that another perſon at* Amſterdam *had the confidence to ſuppoſe gravely, even in print, that the Jeſuit's new ſyſtem would bear a debate among the learned, and by degrees gain a ſtrong, if not the ableſt party to its ſide* [*n*]*:* and if any farther proof be required, he aſſures us, *that though it may juſtly ſeem ſo extravagant and chimerical, as to make ſome good men believe it incapable of doing any miſchief, yet he can prove, on the contrary, that it has already ſpread a taint too far: among ſome, for catholic advantages, among others, for want of knowing that ſecret, or from paſſionate biaſſes to their coins, or to favour their Pyrrhoniſm* [*o*].

The reader will be apt to wonder here again, why our Archdeacon is not more explicit and particular in declaring his proofs, in a cauſe, which, of all others, ſeems to want them the moſt. *He knows, that the plot is carried on with ſucceſs to this day*; *and can prove*, he ſays, *that it has ſpread a taint too far:* yet after he has prepared us, to expect the hiſtory and progreſs of the infection, and what particular perſons it has tainted in this and that nation; he drops all that at once, as if there were ſome latent ſore in it, too tender for him to touch. But it is not very difficult to gueſs at the reaſon: it is his great regard for certain good friends of his whom he is loth to impeach, as accomplices in this *Jeſuitical plot*, which yet he muſt neceſſarily do, whenever he is forced to ſpeak out; I mean the *Tunſtalls* and the *Marklands* of our own country: who, with that ſame *malignant ſpirit againſt the ancients*, of which he talks [p], have been lately making the ſame *deſperate furious puſh*, in this very proteſtant land, to deprive us *of the works of* Cicero, by adding them to the Jeſuit's liſt of *counterfeit romances*, and ſhewing them to be *the fragments of thoſe ſame buſy Sophiſts and recent Fabulators*. For of all the learned in this kingdom, there are none, who, like the *Loyolites of France*, have ventured, *to aſſume that new character, of blazing and faſtidious Hypercritics*, or have puſhed *their proteſtant Pyrrhoniſm* ſo far, as they.

[*m*] See page xi. [*n*] Pag. 19. [*o*] Pag. xi. 20

Yet after all, which I have been ſaying of the Archdeacon's Speech, I muſt do him the juſtice to own, that there are many obſervations occaſionally interſperſed in it, both excedingly curious, and intirely new. I ſhall juſt give one of them, as a ſpecimen of the reſt; by which he informs his reverend brethren, *that the real neceſſaries of learned authors, in theſe times of ours, are extremely great*; *nay almoſt infinitely ſo, beyond any thing, which the multitude can imagine* [q]. This is a diſcovery ſo recondite, and remote from vulgar apprehenſion, that it could not poſſhifts this *Defender of the primitive monks, and their miracles*, will naturally be reduced, whenever he finds it expedient, to give a public teſtimony of his zeal againſt *Rome*; and while he pretends to be fighting againſt Popery, how he will be driven, by the force of his principles, to make but a mock-fight of it, a mere theatrical ſhew, and to combat onely phantaſms of his own dreſſing up.

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[p] Page 17. Note [†].

[q] See pag. 26.

This, I ſay, is the neceſſary conſequence of his principles; of *that ſuperſtitious veneration of the primitive Fathers, and that implicit faith in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory*, which it has been the buſineſs of his life and ſtudies, to inculcate. For I have already ſhewn, by facts and inſtances produced in this Introductory treatiſe, how thoſe Divines of our Church, who carry the authority of the Fathers ſo high, as to make them *the guides and interpreters of our religion*, and who *appeal to them eſpecially in our controverſies with the Papiſts*, preclude themſelves of courſe, from attacking any of thoſe principal corruptions, for the ſake of which, the Proteſtants found it neceſſary, to ſeparate themſelves from the communion of *Rome*. Yet our Archdeacon maintains ſtill, as we have ſeen, in this ſpeech, that the Antient Fathers and Primitive Councils, the *Clements*, the *Chryſoſtoms*, the *Jeroms*, and the *Auſtins*, are the very bulwarks of Proteſtantiſm, and the inſtruments, through which *we may moſt glaringly expoſe to every*

every common eye, the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh Church [t].

Now, as in all diſputes, the readieſt way to find out the truth, is, by reducing them, as far as it is poſſible, to quæſtions of fact, and to the trial of our ſenſes, ſo in this, I ſhall refer myſelf to a fact, which I have endeavoured to exemplify in the foregoing work, with regard to thoſe very Fathers, to whom the Archdeacon appeals; and particularly, to *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom*, and *Auſtin*; concerning whom, I have there affirmed, and do now again affirm, *that they have all ſeverally taught, and practiſed, and warmly recommended to the practice of all Chriſtians, certain rites and doctrines, which, upon their authority, and example, are received and practiſed at this day by the Romiſh Church, but condemned and rejected by Proteſtant Churches, as unſcriptural, ſuperſtitious and idolatrous.* If the Archdeacon allows this fact, every one will ſee at once, without aſking his opinion any farther, on which ſide thoſe Fathers are to be ranged: if he denies it, he muſt deny at the ſame time, that thoſe paſſages, which I have produced in proof of it, are really to be found in them; or otherwiſe, in ſpite of any diſtinction or comment, which he can frame upon them, every man of ſenſe will allow the fact to be true.

But of all the primitive Fathers, *Jerom* ſeems to be the peculiar favorite of our Archdeacon, and, as we may collect from this very ſpeech, is ſuppoſed by him, to be of more eminent ſervice to us than any of them, both againſt the *Papiſts* and the *Freethinkers:* for which reaſon, I have choſen to employ the few pages, that remain, in conſidering his particular merit and principles a little more preciſely: and with that view, ſhall propoſe another fact or two, drawn from his writings; which will enable the reader to form a clear judgement of his character, as far as it relates to the point, now in diſpute, between the Archdeacon and myſelf.

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[t] See pag. 2, &c.

This *Jerom* then, as I have obſerved in the foregoing work, was a moſt zealous admirer and promotor of the *monkiſh life*; and, for the ſake of advancing its credit in the world, wrote the lives of two celebrated Monks; the one called *Paul*, and the other *Hilarion*; in which, after he has invoked *that ſame Holy ſpirit, which inſpired the ſaid Monks, to inſpire him alſo with language, equal to the wonderous acts, which he was going to relate*, he has inſerted a number of tales, and miracles, ſo groſsly fabulous, as not to admit the leaſt doubt, of their being abſolute forgeries. The *Life of Paul* was publiſhed the firſt, and, as we learn from *Jerom* himſelf, was treated, as a *mere fable*, by the Freethinkers, or *Scyllæan dogs*, as he calls them, of thoſe days [u]. Nor is it conſidered at this day in any other character, or mentioned by the learned on any other account, than as a proof, of *that paſſion for fiction and impoſture, which poſſeſſed the Fathers of the 4th century* [x]. Now whether *Jerom* forged theſe tales himſelf, or propagated what he knew to be forged by others, or whether he really believed them, and publiſhed onely, what he took to be true; our Archdeacon may chuſe which he pleaſes, I ſhall not diſpute it with him, ſince the fact, which I would lay before the reader, and with which alone, we are at preſent concerned, is unconteſtable, *that it was one of the principal views of* Jerom's *zeal and writings, to recommend to all Chriſtians,* as the perfection of the Chriſtian life, a ſpecies of monkery, not onely abhorred by Proteſtants, but, in my opinion, more contemptible and ſuperſtitious, than any that is profeſſed at this day in the Church of *Rome*.

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[u] Unde & nos — cœptum ab eo opus aggredientes, maledicorum voces contemnimus: qui olim de-

Again, *Jerom*, as I have intimated alſo above, wrote a little piece or two againſt *Vigilantius*, in which he treats him, as a moſt blaſphemous Heretic, and gives us all the particular articles of his hæreſy, drawn from *Vigilantius's* own words, to the following effect.

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trahentes *Paulo meo*, nunc forte detrahent Hilarioni — verum deſtinato operi imponam manum & *Scyllæos canes* obturata aure tranſibo. Prolog. in vit. S. Hilarion. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 74.

[x] Quam fuerint quarti ſeculi Scriptores fabulis dediti, e vita *Pauli Hieronymiana, ex Athanaſiana Antonii*, etc. intelligimus. Dodw. Diſſert. in Irenæum, ii. § 55.

“ That the honors paid to the rotten bones “ and duſt of the ſaints and martyrs, by adoring, “ kiſſing, wrapping them up in ſilk and veſſels “ of gold, lodging them in their Churches and “ lighting up wax candles before them, after the “ manner of the Heathens, were the inſigns of “ Idolatry [y].

“ That the Cœlibacy of the Clergy was an “ Hæreſy, and their vows of chaſtity the ſemi- “ nary of lewdneſs [z].

“ That to pray for the dead, or to deſire the “ prayers of the dead, was ſuperſtitious: and “ that the Souls of the departed Saints and “ Martyrs were at reſt, in ſome particular place, “ whence they could not remove themſelves at “ pleaſure, ſo as to be preſent every where to the “ prayers of their votaries [a].

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[y] Ais *Vigilantium*—os fœtidum rurſus aperire, & putorem ſpurciſſimum contra Sanctorum Martyrum proferre reliquias, & nos, qui eas ſuſcipimus, appellare cinerarios & idolatras, qui mortuorum hominum Oſſa veneramur, etc. Vide Hieron. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 278, 279, 282, &c.

[z] Dicit—continentiam, hæreſim; pudicitiam, libidinis ſeminarium. Ibid. p 281.

[a] Ais enim vel in ſinu Abrahæ, vel in loco refrigerii, vel ſubter aram Dei animas Apoſtolorum & Martyrum conſediſſe, nec poſſe de ſuis tumulis, & ubi voluerint, adeſſe præſentes—dicis in libello tuo, quod dum vivimus, mutuo pro nobis orare poſſumus; poſtquam autem mortui fuerimus, nullius ſit pro alio ex audienda oratio, etc. Ibid. p. 283, &c.

“That the Sepulchres of the Martyrs ought not to be worſhiped, nor their faſts and vigils to be obſerved [*b*].

“That the ſigns and wonders, ſaid to be wrought by their reliques, and at their Sepulchres, ſerved to no good end or purpoſe of religion [*c*].”

Theſe were the *ſacrilegious* tenets, as *Jerom* calls them, which he could not *bear with patience, or without the utmoſt grief* [*d*]; and for which he declares *Vigilantius to be a moſt deteſtable heretic, venting his foul-mouthed blaſphemies againſt the reliques of the Martyrs, which were working daily ſigns and wonders.* He bids him, *go into the Churches of thoſe Martyrs, and he would be cleanſed from the evil ſpirit, which poſſeſſed him, and feel himſelf burnt, not by thoſe wax candles, which ſo much offended him, but by inviſible flames, which would force that Dæmon who talked within him, to confeſs himſelf to be the ſame, who had perſonated a Mercury, perhaps, or a Bacchus, or ſome other of their Gods among the Heathens* [*e*]. At which wild rate, this good

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[*b*] Qui Martyrum neget ſepulcra veneranda, damnandas dicit eſſe vigilias— Ibid. 281.

[*c*] Argumentatur contra ſigna & virtutes, quæ in Baſilicis Martyrum fiunt, p. 285.

[*d*] Fatebor tibi dolorem meum. Sacrilegium tantum patienter audire non poſſum, p. 280.

[*e*] Ingredere baſilicas Martyrum, & aliquando purgaberis: invenies ibi multos ſocios tuos; & nequaquam cereis Martyrum, qui tibi

Father raves on, through ſeveral pages, in a ſtrain much more furious, than the moſt bigotted Papiſt would uſe at this day, in the defence of the ſame rites.

Let our Archdeacon then ſpeak directly to this fact, and tell us, which of theſe two is acting here the Proteſtant part, and ſerving the Proteſtant cauſe: whether it be *Jerom* or *Vigilantius*: whether the *Primitive Father*, who, by *lies* and *forgeries*, ſo fiercely maintains the honor of *monkery* and *reliques*; or the *Primitive Heretic*, who, by the Principles of reaſon and the Goſpel, ſo firmly rejects them.

But he has told us already in his ſpeech, that the *Jeroms* are the men, who muſt enable us, to expoſe *the unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh principles and practices*: and he will try again, perhaps on this occaſion, what he has tried with ſucceſs on others, to accommodate theſe very facts to his own ſyſtem: and by an art, which he has learnt from *Jerom* himſelf, will teach us, “ that we ought to diſtinguiſh between *the dogmatical and the agoniſtical ſtyle*; that in the firſt, indeed, truth is the object aimed at, but in the ſecond, nothing but victory; that ſincerity therefore is neceſſary in the one, but art onely in the other: that *Jerom* was not here dogmatizing, but fighting with an enemy;

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diſplicent, ſed flammis inviſibilibus combureris —etc. p. 285.

“ and in that caſe, according to his cuſtom, not “ ſaying what he thought true, but what was “ neceſſary to his cauſe, and catching up any “ words, to throw at him, which would beſt “ ſerve, to knock him down: then he will cry “ out again, in the ſame lamentable ſtyle, *that* “ *this is not the firſt time, that poor St.* Jerom *has* “ *been thus mangled and miſrepreſented* [*f*]; that “ I have ſuppreſſed the very expreſſions, which “ would have cleared up the matter and juſtified “ the purity of his principles; for when *Vigilan*“*tius* charges him with Idolatry, for worſhip“ing rotten bones, in the manner above“ mentioned, that I had omitted to acquaint the “ reader, how *Jerom* denies the charge, and de“ clares, *that they paid no divine worſhip to any* “ *thing but to God, that by honoring the reliques* “ *of the Martyrs, they meant to adore him, whoſe* “ *Martyrs they were; and gave honor to the* “ *ſervants, that the honor of the ſervants might re*“*dound to their Lord, who ſays, He that receiveth* “ *you receiveth me* [*g*].” And what is this after all, but the ſame trifling and evaſive diſtinction, with which the *Romaniſts* defend the ſame practices at this day, and ſhift off that charge of Idolatry, which is urged againſt them by the Heretical Proteſtants?

[*f*] Honoramus autem reliquias Martyrum, ut eum, cujus ſunt Martyres, adoremus. Honoramus ſervos, ut honor ſervorum redundet ad Dominum; qui ait; Qui vos ſuſcipit, me ſuſcipit. Hieron. Op. T. iv. par. ii. p. 279.

[*g*] See Dr. Chapman's defence of Jerom—in Miſcellan. Tracts, pag. 30. &c.

But to purſue this point a little farther. There is another ſhort paſſage, in the ſame work of *Jerom*, where he urges *Vigilantius*, in the following manner: " That if it were ſuch a ſacrilege, " or impiety, as *Vigilantius* contends, to pay " thoſe honors to the reliques of the Saints; " then *the Emperor Conſtantius* muſt needs be a " ſacrilegious perſon, who tranſlated the *holy re-* " *liques of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy, to Conſtan-* " *tinople:* then *Arcadius Auguſtus* alſo muſt be " held ſacrilegious, who tranſlated the bones of " *the bleſſed Samuel* from *Judæa*, where they had " lain ſo many ages, into *Thrace:* then all the " Biſhops likewiſe were not onely ſacrilegious, " but ſtupid too, who ſubmitted to carry a thing, " the moſt contemptible, and nothing but mere " duſt, in ſilk and veſſels of gold: and laſtly, " then the people of all the Churches muſt " needs be fools, who went out to meet thoſe " holy reliques, and received them, with as much " joy, as if they had ſeen the Prophet himſelf, " living, and preſent among them: for the pro- " ceſſion was attended by ſwarms of people, " from *Palæſtine*, even unto *Chalcedon*, ſinging " with one voice the praiſes of Chriſt, who were " yet adoring *Samuel* perhaps, and not Chriſt, " whoſe Prophet and Levite *Samuel* was [*b*]."

Now let the Archdeacon declare once more, what it is, that we muſt ſay and think, *of theſe*

[*b*] Ergo—Sacrilegus fuit Conſtantius Imperator, &c. Ibid. p. 282, 3.

tranſlations and proceſſions of holy reliques, which were ſolemnized, as *Jerom* here deſcribes them, with ſuch pomp and pageantry of devotion, by the Emperors, Biſhops, people, and all Chriſtian Churches of thoſe Primitive times. Muſt we, with *Vigilantius*, call them acts of impiety, ſuperſtition and ſtupidity; or with *Jerom*, treat ſuch an opinion as blaſphemous and heretical? but whatever anſwer he may give, we may venture to affirm, without waiting for it, what is ſufficient for my purpoſe, and notorious to all, who have heard or ſeen, what paſſes in the *Church of Rome*, that *Jerom's* account of *thoſe primitive reliques and their tranſlations*, is the very form, and pattern, by which *the Romaniſts tranſlate, receive and venerate their holy reliques* at this day.

I have now ſaid enough, for the preſent occaſion, concerning the uſe of the Fathers, and particularly of *Jerom*, with regard to our controverſies with the Papiſts, yet cannot put an end to this Poſtſcript, without adding a word or two, on what the Archdeacon has farther intimated, with reſpect to the ſame *Jerom*, and another ſort of enemies *the Freethinkers*; who make him likewiſe, as he would perſuade us, the particular object of their ſpleen, and would be glad, as well as the Papiſts, to get rid of him at any rate. Now if this had been ſaid of the Freethinkers onely, in popiſh countries, there would have been ſome ſenſe in it; but as it is here applied, there is certainly none at all. For in the Romiſh Church, there are many, without doubt, who from a freedom of thinking, ſuperior to that of the vulgar, muſt needs condemn the whole ſyſtem of their monkery, their worſhip of Saints and reliques, their holy water, holy oil, croſſes, maſſes, exorciſms, and all their other ſuperſtitions; manifeſtly contrived, to ſerve purpoſes merely ſecular; to ſupport the power, and increaſe the wealth of the Clergy: and it is natural to imagine, that men, whoſe ſcepticiſm turned chiefly on thoſe rites and practices, might be particularly galled, by the writings of *Jerom*, or the other Fathers, by whoſe authority, they were all at firſt propagated, and are ſtill maintained, and forcibly impoſed upon them. But the caſe is widely different in Proteſtant countries; where we are neither teized with ſuch fopperies, nor tied down to the authority of the Fathers; and where the Freethinkers conſequently have no reaſon, to fancy themſelves ſpecially hurt by any of them; but on the contrary, many obvious reaſons, why they ſhould enjoy and rejoice in them all; as affording infinite matter for the ſport of ſceptical wits; in the credulity, the ſuperſtition, the pious frauds, and forged miracles of thoſe primitive times: all which, they have never failed to ſet forth, as the genuin characters of the Chriſtian Prieſthood, and Chriſtian Churches of all ages; and to play them off with all their art, ſo as to make them bear againſt religion itſelf; and they bear indeed in the ſtrongeſt manner againſt the religion of *Rome*, as being wholly founded, and ſtill ſupported by thoſe very arts. But the Proteſtants ſtand clear, and unconcerned in the diſpute; and have nothing to do, but to look on, and divert themſelves with the iſſue of it. For their religion reſts on quite another foot, on the ſingle, but ſolid foundation of the ſacred Scriptures; unmixed with rubbiſh of antient tradition, or antient Fathers; and independent on the characters and writings of any men whatſoever, except of Moſes and the Prophets; Chriſt and the Apoſtles. But when Proteſtant Divines, urged on by an unhappy zeal, or the vanity of diſplaying their ſuperior learning, think fit, to take up the quarrel, as their own; and when *Archdeacons* eſpecially, and *Lambeth Chaplains*, come forth, with a ſort of oracular authority, to defend thoſe primitive frauds and forgeries, and declare the cauſe of the Fathers, to be the common cauſe of all Chriſtians; then the affair indeed becomes ſerious; for this adds a real force and ſting to the railleries of the Sceptics; turns their ſlight cavils, into grave objections, and points them directly againſt Proteſtantiſm itſelf.

AN INQUIRY INTO The MIRACULOUS POWERS, etc.

I NOW procede, according to my promiſe, to a more preciſe and accurate Diſcuſſion of the argument of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, and to open all the particular proofs, which induced me finally to embrace it, with that freedom and impartiality, which becomes every ingenuous and diſintereſted inquirer after truth: and, that I may lay the whole quæſtion before the reader in the cleareſt light, I propoſe to obſerve the following method:

I. To draw out, in their proper order, all the principal teſtimonies, which relate to the miraculous gifts of the Church, as they are found in the writings of the Fathers from the earlieſt ages, after the days of the Apoſtles. Whence we ſhall ſee, at one view, the whole evidence, by which they have hitherto been ſupported.

II. To throw together all, which thoſe Fathers alſo have delivered, concerning the condition of the perſons who are ſaid to have been indued with thoſe gifts, and to have wrought the miracles, to which they appeal.

III. To illuſtrate the particular characters and opinions of the Fathers, who atteſt thoſe miracles; ſo as to enable us to determine with more exactneſs, what degree of credit may be due to their teſtimony.

IV. To review all the ſeveral kinds of miracles, which are pretended to have been wrought, and to obſerve, from the nature of each, how far the credibility of them may reaſonably be ſuſpected.

V. To refute ſome of the moſt plauſible objections, which have hitherto been made by my antagoniſts, or which the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of many pious Chriſtians may be apt to ſuggeſt to the general turn of my argument.

I. In collecting all the facts and teſtimonies, which relate to the preſent argument, from the earlieſt antiquity, after the days of the Apoſtles, our firſt thoughts are carried of courſe to the *Apoſtolic* Fathers, that is, to thoſe, who had lived and converſed with the Apoſtles, and who, by their ſpecial appointment, were ordained to ſuccede them in the Government of the Church. For as there are ſeveral of this character, whoſe writings ſtill remain to us, St. *Barnabas*, St. *Clemens*, St. *Ignatius*, St. *Polycarp*, St. *Hermas*, ſo it is natural to expect, that, in theſe valued remains, the Hiſtory of the miraculous gifts, which are ſo much celebrated by the writers of the New Teſtament, ſhould be carried on ſtill in the ſame manner by theſe their immediate ſucceſſors, through the next generation. For if any ſuch gifts had been actually ſubſiſting in their days, it is highly probable, that men of their eminent zeal and piety, who had ſeen the wonderful effects of them, under the management of the Apoſtles, and muſt themſelves have poſſeſſed a large ſhare of them, would have made ſome appeal or reference to them, in their circular epiſtles to the Churches, as their predeceſſors had done, for the honor of the Goſpel, and the credit of their own miniſtry. But inſtead of this, it is remarkable, that there is not the leaſt claim or pretenſion, in all their ſeveral pieces, to any of thoſe extraordinary gifts, which are the ſubject of this inquiry; nor to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as reſiding ſtill among them, for the converſion of the Heathen world. The whole purpoſe of their writings is, to illuſtrate the excellence and purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine; and the whole power of their miniſtry ſeems to have lain, in the innocent and amiable character of their lives, and in the pious, charitable, and fervent ſtrain of their paſtoral exhortations.

They ſpeak indeed in general, of certain *ſpiritual Gifts*, as abounding among the Chriſtians of that age: yet theſe cannot reaſonably be interpreted to mean any thing more, than the *ordinary gifts and graces* of the Goſpel, *faith*, *hope*, *and charity*; *the love of God and of man*; which they all recommend in the warmeſt terms, and appear to have poſſeſſed in the higheſt degree. *Archbiſhop Wake* however, who has tranſlated their works into *Engliſh*, ſays, that, *in all probability, they were indued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and that there are ſufficient indications of it in their writings* [1]*:* "which he "endeavours to confirm, not by any facts or "expreſs teſtimonies, drawn from themſelves, "but by inferences onely or conjectures, "grounded on a ſuppoſed frequency of thoſe "indowments in that age, and the communi- "cation of them, as he ſays, to much leſſer and "worſer men; on the ſanctity of their lives, "and the greatneſs of the ſtations, to which "they were called by the Apoſtles; and on the "accounts of them, tranſmitted to us by their "Succeſſors: from all which he concludes, that "they were not onely inſtructed by perſons in- "ſpired, but were themſelves alſo in ſome mea- "ſure inſpired too, or indued with the extraor- "dinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt [2]." But whatever gifts of this ſort they may be ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed, it is certain at leaſt, as the ſame Tranſlator of their works takes occaſion to inculcate, that their indowments were *far inferior both in their kind and degree*, to thoſe of their Predeceſſors, the Apoſtles [1].

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[1] See Prelim. Diſc. c. x. § 11, 12.

[2] Ib. § 18, 23.

But the learned *Mr. Dodwell*, a writer of a more ſanguin complexion, peremptorily declares, from the mere title or addreſs of *St. Ignatius's* Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*, that miracles ſubſiſted in great abundance in thoſe days; becauſe that Church is there ſtyled, *bleſſed with every good gift, and wanting in no good gift* [2]. Yet theſe words, as they are explained by the context, manifeſtly ſignify nothing more, than the ordinary gifts of the Goſpel, *Faith and Charity:* for the whole paſſage runs thus: *To the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jeſus Chriſt, which God hath mercifully bleſſed with every good gift, being filled with Faith and Charity, ſo as to be wanting in no good gift* [3]. In another Epiſtle likewiſe of St. *Ignatius*, to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards *Rome*, whither he was going to ſuffer martyrdom, there are theſe words; "I am willing to die for God, "unleſs you hinder me. I beſeech you, that "you ſhew not an unſeaſonable good will to-

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[1] See Prelim. Diſc. c. x. § 11, 23.

[2] Diſſertat. in Iren. ii. § 7.

[3] Ἠλεημένη ἐν παντὶ χαρίσματι, πεπληροφορημένη ἐν πίστει ϗ ἀγάπῃ, ἀνυστερήτῳ οὔσῃ παντὸς χαρίσματος. Epiſt. ad Smyrn.

“ wards me: ſuffer me to be food for the wild “ beaſts, by whom I ſhall attain unto God: for “ I am the wheat of God, and ſhall be ground “ by the teeth of the wild beaſts, that I may be “ found the pure bread of Chriſt, *&c.* [1].” From which words, the ſame learned perſon again infers, *that the prayers of the primitive Chriſtians had the power to diſable the wild beaſts from aſſaulting the Martyrs, who were expoſed to them in the Amphitheatres* [2]. Yet the paſſage itſelf has not the leaſt reference to prayers, or to any thing miraculous, but to the ordinary endeavours and interceſſion of the Chriſtian brethren at *Rome*, who offered to uſe their intereſt to preſerve him from that cruel death, which he was then going to ſuffer: to which ſenſe it is expreſsly reſtrained, in the relation of his Martyrdom, written by thoſe who accompanied him in this very journey, and were preſent at his death, by whom we are told; “ that the bre“ thren, who came out to meet him on his ap“ proach to that city, and were zealous for his “ ſafety, *undertook to appeaſe the people*, ſo that “ when he came to be expoſed to the wild “ beaſts in the Amphitheatre, *they ſhould not de“ ſire his deſtruction:* but the Saint over-ruled,

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[1] Παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μὴ εὔνοια ἄκαιρος γένησθέ μοι. ἄφετέ με θηρίων εἶναι βορὰν, &c. Ad Rom. c. iv.

[2] Ex Epiſtola ad Romanos intelligimus, Martyribus nonnullis datum, ne poſſent in eos beſtiæ immiſſæ ſævire. Proinde illud a *Romanis* enixiſſimis precibus contendit, ne eorum orationibus id in ſua cauſa contingeret. Diſſ. Iren. ii. § 10.

"*and commanded them to be quiet* [1]." And to the ſame ſenſe alſo Dr. *Cave* has interpreted it, in his *Life of this Saint.* "The Chriſtians at "*Rome*, ſays he, came out to meet and entertain "him — and when ſome of them did but intimate, that poſſibly the people might be taken "off from deſiring his death; he expreſſed a "pious indignation, intreating them to caſt no "rubs in his way, that might hinder him, now "he was haſtening to his crown [2]."

And in truth, all the other expreſſions of theſe Fathers, which are commonly underſtood to ſignify the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, may be interpreted more rationally and more agreeably to the general turn of their writings to denote onely the ordinary graces of the Goſpel, faith and charity; which they conſtantly extol, as ſuperior to all other perfections; as *things wonderful and admirable*; and *the peculiar gifts of God* [3]: nay in ſome places,

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[1] See Relat. of Martyrd. of S. *Ignat.* § 9, 10, 12.

[2] See *Cave's* Lives of the Saints, Vol. i. p. 105. § 8.

[3] Clem. i. Epiſt. ad Corinth. c. xlix, l. It. Ignat. Ep. ad Epheſ. xiv.

Thus when St. *Clemens* tells the *Corinthians*, that *they had all been bleſſed with a large effuſion of the Holy Spirit*, [§ 11.] yet this effuſion, as it appears from the context, was not of a kind which conferred any extraordinary powers, but onely pious affections and good inclinations. And in the ſame Epiſtle, where he is exhorting them to ſubmit themſelves one to another, according to *the gift*, which had been beſtowed upon each: he means nothing more by *that gift*, or *chariſma*, as he calls it, than the different talents, abilities, and they ſeem even to diſclame all gifts of a more extraordinary kind. Thus *Polycarp*, in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, ſays; "theſe things, "my brethren, I took not the liberty to write to "you of myſelf, concerning righteouſneſs, but "you before encouraged me to it. For neither "I, nor any other ſuch as I am, can come up "to the wiſdom of the bleſſed and renowned "*Paul.* And in the ſame Epiſtle he declares, "that it was not granted to him, to practiſe "that, which is written in the Scripture, *Be* "*angry and ſin not, and let not the ſun go down* "*upon your wrath* [1]." St. *Ignatius* alſo, in his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, ſays; "theſe things I "preſcribe to you, not as if I were ſome body "extraordinary, for tho' I am bound for his "name, I am not yet perfect in *Jeſus Chriſt*, but "now I begin to learn, and ſpeak to you, as to "fellow-diſciples. For I ought to have been "ſtirred up by you in faith, in admonition, "*&c.* [2]."

This ſame Saint indeed, in one or two of his Epiſtles, ſeems to intimate, that the knowledge of certain events had been communicated to him by the Spirit. Thus, in his Epiſtle to the *Philadelphians*, ſpeaking of the earneſt exhortations, which he had given them, to unity and ſub-

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advantages, whether natural or acquired, of *ſtrength, wiſdom, riches, continence*, &c. by which Providence thinks fit to diſtinguiſh the different characters of men, § 38.

[1] Ep. ad Philipp. c. iii. it. c. xii.

[2] Ad Epheſ. c. iii.

miſſion

miſſion to their ***Biſhops***, ***Prieſts***, and ***Deacons***, he ſays; "ſome people ſuſpected, that I was ac-"quainted before hand with the diviſions "among you: but he is my witneſs, for whom "I am bound, that I did not know it from any "human fleſh, but the ſpirit declared it, ſpeak-"ing thus, *Do nothing without your Biſhop*, "&c." [1] from which Dr. *Wake* takes occaſion to infer, *that he was indued with a large Portion of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt* [2]: yet I do not find, that any other Commentator has ventured to build any thing miraculous or ſupernatural upon it.

It is related likewiſe of *Polycarp*, in the antient narrative of his martyrdom, "how in the time "of that perſecution, in which his life was par-"ticularly ſought for by the Heathen Ma-"giſtrates, he withdrew himſelf from *Smyrna*, "by the advice of his friends, into a little vil-"lage, where he ſpent his days and nights in "prayer, with a few, who accompanied him; "and as he was praying, a viſion was offered to "him, three days before he was taken, in which "he ſaw his pillow on fire: whereupon, turning "preſently to his companions, he ſaid prophe-"tically, I muſt certainly be burnt alive." The ſame narrative calls him alſo a *Prophetic teacher*; and declares, *that every word, which he uttered, had either been fulfilled, or would be fulfilled* [3].

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[1] Ad Epheſ. c. vii. [2] See Prelim. Treat. c. x. § 13.
[3] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. v, xvi.

Whence ſome later writers have affirmed, that he was indued with a ſpirit of prophecy, and foretold every thing, that was to happen to him. But the foreſight of his death, and the manner of it, in the time of a cruel perſecution, when his perſon was particularly hunted from village to village, as the principal and deſtined ſacrifice, may reaſonably be conſidered as the effect of common prudence, without recurring to any thing miraculous.

Here then we have an interval of about half a century, the earlieſt and pureſt of all Chriſtian Antiquity after the days of the Apoſtles, in which we find not the leaſt reference to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as exerted openly in the Church, for the conviction of unbelievers; but, on the contrary, the ſtrongeſt reaſon to preſume, that the extraordinary gifts of the Apoſtolic age were by this time actually withdrawn; and the Goſpel left to make its way by its own ſtrength, and the authority of thoſe credentials, and original miracles, with which Chriſt had furniſhed it, as an effectual ſecurity of its ſucceſs and triumphs over the powers of the earth. Yet before we take leave of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, it may be proper to obſerve, for the prevention of unneceſſary cavils; that, if from the paſſages referred to above, or from any other, which may be found in them, it ſhould appear probable to any, that they were favored on ſome occaſions, with *extraordinary illuminations, viſions, or divine impreſſions*, I ſhall not diſpute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that ſort were merely perſonal, granted for their particular comfort, and reaching no farther than to themſelves; and do not therefore in any manner affect or relate to the quæſtion now before us.

But if the Apoſtolic writers have left us in the dark, with regard to our preſent argument, their Succeſſors, it muſt be owned, as far as their authority reaches, have cleared it from all obſcurity, by their ſtrong, explicit, and repeated atteſtations of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, which were conſtantly and publicly exerted in the Chriſtian Church, thro' each ſucceding age.

Juſtin Martyr, who is ſuppoſed to have written his firſt Apology within fifty years after the days of the Apoſtles, ſays, " There are prophe-
" tical gifts among us at this day, and both men
" and women indued with extraordinary powers
" by the Spirit of God [1]." And he frequent-
" ly appeals, to what every one might ſee with
" his own eyes, in every part of the world, and
" particularly in *Rome*, in the caſe of perſons
" poſſeſſed with Devils; who were cured and
" ſet free, and the Devils themſelves baffled and
" driven away by the Chriſtians, adjuring or ex-
" orciſing them in the name of *Jeſus*, when all

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[1] Παρὰ γὰρ ἡμῖν ϗ μέχρι νῦν προφητικὰ χαρίσματά ἐστιν, etc. Καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἐστιν ἰδεῖν ϗ θηλείας ϗ ἄρσενας χαρίσματα ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχοντας. Dial. par. ii. p. 315, & 330. Edit. Thirlb.

"other Exorciſts and Inchanters had tried in vain to help them [1]."

Irenæus, who was contemporary with *Juſtin*, but wrote ſomewhat later, and lived much longer, affirms; "that all, who were truly diſciples of *Jeſus*, receiving grace from him, wrought miracles in his name, for the good of mankind, according to the gift, which each man had received: ſome caſt out Devils, ſo that thoſe, from whom they were ejected, often turned believers, and continued in the Church: others had the knowledge of future events, viſions, and prophetical ſayings: others healed the ſick by the impoſition of hands; that even the dead had been raiſed, and lived afterwards many years among them: that it was impoſſible, to reckon up all the mighty works, which the Church performed every day, to the benefit of nations; neither deceiving, nor making a gain of any, but freely beſtowing, what it had freely received [2]." And as to the particular miracle of *raiſing the dead*, he declares it "to have been frequently performed on neceſſary occaſions; when by great faſting, and the joint ſupplication of the Church of that place, the ſpirit of the dead perſon returned into him, and the man was given back to the prayers of the Saints [3]." And again,

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[1] Apolog. ii. p. 116. vid. etiam p. 96, 303, 320, 21, &c.

[2] Adverſ. Hæreſ. l. ii. c. lvii. p. 188. Edit. Oxon. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. vii.

[3] Adverſ. Hæreſ. l. ii.

" we hear many, ſays he, in the Church indued " with prophetic gifts; ſpeaking with all kind " of tongues; laying open the ſecrets of men " for the public good; and expounding the " myſteries of God [1]."

Theophilus, Biſhop of *Antioch*, who lived in the ſame age with *Irenæus*, ſpeaking of the *evil and ſeducing Spirits*, which uſed to inſpire the Poets and Prophets of the Heathen world, ſays; " the " truth of this is manifeſtly ſhewn; becauſe " thoſe, who are poſſeſſed by ſuch Spirits, are " ſometimes exorciſed even at this day by us, in " the name of the true God; when theſe ſe- " ducing Spirits confeſs themſelves to be the " ſame Dæmons, who had before inſpired the " Heathen Poets [2]."

Tertullian, who floriſhed towards the end of the ſecond, and died in the beginning of the third century, challenges the Heathen Magiſtrates, " to call before their tribunals, any " perſon poſſeſſed with a *Devil:* and if the evil " ſpirit, when exorciſed by any Chriſtian what- " ſoever, did not own himſelf to be a Devil, as " truly, as in other places, he would falſely call " himſelf a God, not daring to tell a lie to a " Chriſtian, that then they ſhould take the life " of that Chriſtian: and what is more manifeſt, " adds he, than this operation; what more con-

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c. lvi. p. 186. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. ibid.

[1] Adverſ. Hæreſ. l. v. c. vi. p. 406.

[2] Ad. Autolyc. l. xxi. p. 87. c. ad calcem Oper. Juſt. Mart. Par. 1636.

“ vincing than this proof [1].” In another place, “ there is a Siſter, ſays he, among us, “ indued with the gifts of revelations, which ſhe “ ſuffers in the Church, during the time of di“ vine ſervice, by an ecſtaſy in the ſpirit: ſhe “ converſes with Angels, and ſometimes alſo “ with the Lord: ſees and hears myſteries: and “ know the hearts of ſome, and preſcribes medi“ cines to thoſe, who want them [2].”

Minucius Felix, who is ſuppoſed to have written in the beginning of the third century, addreſſing himſelf to his Heathen friend in his Dialogue, called *Octavius*, ſays; “ the greateſt “ part of you know, what confeſſions the Dæ“ mons make concerning themſelves, as oft as “ they are expelled by us out of the bodies of “ men, by the torture of our words, and the fire “ of our ſpeech. *Saturn* himſelf, and *Serapis* “ and *Jupiter*, and the reſt of them, whom you “ worſhip, conſtrained by the pain, which they “ feel, confeſs what they are: nor in this do “ they tell us a lie, though it be to their own “ ſhame, eſpecially when ſome of your people “ are preſent. Believe them, therefore, to be “ Dæmons, from their own teſtimony, and true “ confeſſion. For being adjured by the true and

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[1] Edatur hic aliquis ſub tribunalibus veſtris, quem Dæmone agi conſtet. Juſſus a quolibet Chriſtiano loqui ſpiritus ille, tam ſe Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam Deum alibi de falſo— quid iſto opere manifeſtius? quid hac probatione fidelius? Apolog. c. xxiii.

[2] De Anima, § 9.

"onely God, they unwillingly and wretchedly "betray their uneaſineſs in the bodies of men; "and either fly out inſtantly, or vaniſh gradually, in proportion as the faith of the patient, "or the grace of the agent aſſiſts towards the "cure [1]."

Origen, who lived at the ſame time with *Minucius*, though ſomething younger, declares; "that "there remained ſtill among the Chriſtians of "his days, the manifeſt indications of that Holy "Spirit, which was ſeen in the ſhape of a Dove. "For they drive away Devils, ſays he; perform many cures; foreſee things to come; "according to the will of the divine Word: "and though *Celſus* and the *Jew*, who is introduced by him, will make a jeſt, of what I am "going to ſay, I will ſay it nevertheleſs; that "many people, as it were againſt their wills, "have been brought over to Chriſtianity, by "the Spirit giving a ſudden turn to their "minds, and offering viſions to them either by "day or by night; ſo that inſtead of hating "the word, they became ready even to lay down "their lives for it. I have ſeen many examples of this ſort; and ſhould I onely ſet down "ſuch of them, as were tranſacted in my preſence, I ſhould expoſe myſelf to the loud "laughter of the unbelievers, who imagine that "we, like the reſt, whom they ſuſpect of forging ſuch things, are impoſing our forgeries

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[1] Minuc. Octav. p. 23. ad calcem Edit. Cyprian. per Rigalt. Pariſ.

“ alſo upon them: but God is my witneſs, that “ my ſole purpoſe is, to recommend the religion “ of *Jeſus*, not by fictitious tales, but by clear “ and evident facts [1].”

In another place, he ſays; “ that miracles “ began with the preaching of *Jeſus*, were multiplied after his aſcenſion, and then again decreaſed; but that, even in his days, ſome remains of them continued with a few, whoſe “ ſouls were cleanſed by the word, and a Life “ conformable to it. [2].” Again; ſome, ſays “ he, in proof of a miraculous power received “ through faith in Chriſt, heal the ſick, by invoking the name of God over them, and of “ *Jeſus*, with a recital of ſome ſtory of his life. “ I myſelf have ſeen many ſo healed in difficult “ caſes; loſs of ſenſes, madneſs, and innumerable other evils, which neither men nor Devils could cure [3].” Again; ſpeaking of “ Devils, We are ſo far, ſays he, from worſhiping them, that by prayers and the rehearſal “ of ſome paſſages of the ſacred writ, we drive “ them before us; out of men and places, and “ alſo out of beaſts; for they ſometimes attempt “ to do miſchief alſo to theſe [4].” Then as to the method of performing this miracle; "it "was not, he ſays, by any curious, magical, "or inchanting arts, but by prayer alone, and "certain plain adjurations or exorciſms, which "any ſimple Chriſtian might perform: for even "common and illiterate laymen were generally "the actors in this caſe [1]." In which no man was more eminent, than one of his own diſciples, *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, who caſt out Devils, not onely by word of mouth, but even by *a meſſage*, or *mandatory letter to them*; as the Eccleſiaſtical writers have recorded of him [2].

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[1] Cont. Celſ. l. i. p. 34, 35. Edit. Cant. &c. ib. l. vii. p. 337. it. l. ii. 62.

[2] Σημεῖα δὲ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν τῆς Ἰησοῦ διδασκαλίας, μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάληψιν αὐτοῦ πλείονα ἐδείκνυτο, ὕστερον δὲ ἐλάττονα. πλὴν καὶ νῦν ἔτι ἐ.ὶν ἴχνη αὐτοῦ παρ' ὀλίγοις.

[3] Ibid l. iii. p. 124.

[4] Ἔθ' ὅτε δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ζώων. πολλάκις γὰρ ἐπὶ τῇ λύμῃ καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἐνεργοῦσί τινα οἱ δαίμονες. Ibid. l. vii. p. 376.

Cyprian, the ſcholar of *Tertullian*, who wrote about the middle of the third century, ſpeaking of *prophetic viſions*, which was the peculiar gift of that age, ſays; "beſides the viſions of the "night, even boys among us are filled with the "Holy Ghoſt, and in fits of ecſtacy, ſee, hear, "and ſpeak things, by which the Lord thinks "fit to inſtruct us [3]." And deſcribing all the various pranks of the Devils, "they inſinuate "themſelves, ſays he, into the bodies of men, "raiſe terrors in the mind, diſtortions in the "limbs, break the conſtitution, and bring on "diſeaſes —— yet adjured by us in the name

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[1] Ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιοῦτον πράττουσι. Ibid. p. 334.

[2] Κακεῖ πρῶτον μὲν λαϊκὸς ὤν, πολλὰ σημεῖα ἐποίησε, νοσοῦντας θεραπεύων, καὶ δαίμονας δι' ἐπιστολῶν φυγαδεύων. Socrat. Hiſt. l. iv. 27.

[3] Præter nocturnas enim viſiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu ſancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in exſtaſi videt oculis, & audit & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere & inſtruere dignatur. Epiſt. ix. Edit. Rigalt. Par.

"of the true God, they preſently yield, confeſs, "and are forced to quit the bodies, which they "poſſeſſed. You may ſee them by our command, and the ſecret operation of the divine "power, laſhed with ſcourges, ſcorched with "fire, tortured by an increaſe of pains; howling, groaning, begging; confeſſing whence "they came, and whither they go, even in the "hearing of their own worſhipers: and they "either fly out immediately, or vaniſh gradually, according to the faith of the patient, or "the grace of him, who works the cure [1]." In another place, treating again on the ſame miracle, "It is performed, ſays he, at this day, "ſo that the Devil is laſhed and burned and "tortured by the Exorciſts, with human words, "but a divine power: and when he promiſes "to go out, and to diſmiſs the men of God, "he often deceives, and by the ſame lie of obſtinacy and fraud, does what *Pharoah* had "done before, till he is oppreſſed by the ſalutary water of Baptiſm [2]."

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[1] Ibid. De Idolor. vanit. p. 206.

[2] Ibid. Epiſt. lxxvi. p. 154. The example of *Pharaoh*, here alluded to, is explaned by him in the following manner: King *Pharaoh* having ſtruggled and perſiſted in his perfidy, was able to carry on his reſiſtance ſo far, till he came to the water, where he was ſubdued and deſtroyed. For that Sea, as St. *Paul* ſays, was the Sacrament of Baptiſm.—And ſo he ſhews, how the Devils uſed to act the ſame part, when adjured by the Chriſtian Exorciſts, and continued to afflict the people of God till they came to the water of Baptiſm.

Arnobius, who is ſuppoſed to have publiſhed his book againſt the Gentiles, in the year of Chriſt 303, tells us, "that Chriſt uſed to appear ſometimes in thoſe days, to juſt and holy men, not in vain dreams, but in his pure and ſimple form: and that the mention of his name put the evil ſpirits to flight; ſtruck their prophets dumb; deprived the Soothſayers of the power of anſwering; and fruſtrated the acts of arrogant Magicians; not by the terror or hatred of his name, as the Heathens pretended, but by the efficacy of his ſuperior power [1]."

Lactantius, the diſciple of *Arnobius*, who floriſhed and wrote about the ſame time, ſpeaking of thoſe Dæmons or evil ſpirits, ſays; "that being adjured by the Chriſtians in the name of God, they retire out of the bodies of men; and being laſhed by their words, as by ſcourges, confeſs themſelves to be Dæmons; and even tell their names; the ſame, which are adored in the Temples; and this even in the preſence of their worſhipers; yet caſting no reproach on religion, but on their own honor, becauſe it is not in their power to lie either to God, in whoſe name they are ad-

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[1] Qui juſtiſſimis viris etiam nunc impollutis, ac diligentibus ſeſe, non per vana inſomnia, ſed per puræ ſpeciem ſimplicitatis apparet. Cujus nomen auditum fugat noxios ſpiritus. Imponit ſilentium vatibus. Haruſpices inconſultos reddit. Arrogantium Magorum fruſtrari efficit actiones, non horrore, ut dicitur, nominis, ſed majoris licentia poteſtatis. Lib. i. p. 13. ad calcem Oper. Cyprian. Edit. per Rigalt.

"jured, or to the juſt, by whoſe voice they are tor-"tured: wherefore after many howlings, they "frequently cry out, that they are ſcourged and "burned, and are going out inſtantly [1]."

Theſe are the principal teſtimonies, which aſſert the miraculous gifts of the Primitive Church, through the three firſt centuries: which might be ſupported ſtill by many more of the ſame kind, and from the ſame, as well as different writers, if it were neceſſary [2]. But theſe are ſufficient for our purpoſe: and the warmeſt admirers of thoſe ages, will not ſcruple, I dare ſay, to riſk the fate of the cauſe upon the merit of them: for if theſe cannot command belief, the credit of the miracles in quæſtion muſt ſink at once; ſince Chriſtian antiquity can furniſh no other evidence in their favor, half ſo ſtrong and authentic as this.

I ſhall cloſe this firſt article with a remark or two, which it ſeems naturally to ſuggeſt. It has already been obſerved, that the ſilence of all the Apoſtolic writers, on the ſubject of theſe gifts, muſt diſpoſe us to conclude, that in thoſe days they were actually withdrawn. And if this concluſion be thought to have any weight in it, then ſurely the pretended revival of them, after a ceſſation of forty or fifty years, and the confident atteſtation of them made by all the ſucceeding Fathers, cannot fail of infuſing a ſuſpicion of ſome fiction in the caſe. For if they did really ceaſe for ſo long an interval, and at a time, when the Chriſtian cauſe ſeemed to want them the moſt, as being then deprived of it's firſt and ableſt champions, the Apoſtles, we cannot conceive any reaſon, why they ſhould afterwards be revived, when the Church, without any ſuch help, had been gathering more and more ſtrength all that while, by its own natural force. But it is remarkable, that as the Church continued to increaſe in power and credit, ſo it's miraculous gifts are ſaid to have increaſed alſo in the ſame proportion: for tho' by an increaſe of power it certainly ſtood leſs in need of true miracles, yet by the ſame power it became more able to reward, and more likely therefore to excite falſe pretenſions to them.

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[1] Divin. Inſtitut. lib. ii. c. xvi.

[2] See Mr. *Whiſton's* Account of the Dæmoniacs, *&c.* in which he has collected many more teſtimonies relating to them, to ſhew, that the gift of curing them continued to the middle of the fourth century.

Again, the difference which every one may perceive, between the miraculous gifts of the Apoſtolic days, and theſe of the following ages, not onely in the nature, but in the manner alſo of exerting them, will greatly confirm the ſuſpicion juſt intimated. The Apoſtles wrought their miracles on ſpecial occaſions, when they felt themſelves prompted to it by a divine impulſe; but at other times, were deſtitute of that power; as it is evident from many facts and inſtances, recorded in the New Teſtament. Agreeably to which, tho' they appeal ſometimes, in confirmation of their miſſion, to the miraculous works, which their Maſter had inabled them to perform, yet we never find them calling out upon the Magiſtrates and people, to come and ſee the mighty wonders, which they were ready to exhibit before their eyes, on all occaſions, at any warning, and in all places, whenever they thought fit. Whereas this confident and oſtentatious manner of proclaming their extraordinary powers, carries with it an air of quackery and impoſture, as it was practiſed by the primitive wonder-workers; who, in the affair eſpecially of caſting out Devils, challenge all the world to come and ſee, with what a ſuperiority of power they could chaſtiſe and drive thoſe evil ſpirits out of the bodies of men, when no other *Conjurers*, *Inchanters*, or *Exorciſts*, either among the Jews or the Gentiles, had been able to eject them.

II. Under this head, I ſhall briefly lay before the reader, all ſuch notices, as I have been able to draw, from any of the Primitive writers, concerning the perſons, who were indued with theſe extraordinary gifts, and wrought the ſeveral miracles, to which they appeal.

Now whenever we think, or ſpeak with reverence, of thoſe primitive times, it is with regard always to theſe very Fathers, whoſe teſtimonies I have been collecting; who have left behind them, in their writings, the genuin ſpecimens of their ſanctity and abilities. *Venerable Saints, and eminent lights of the beſt and pureſt ages*, as *Dr. Waterland* calls them, *and of admi-*

admirable indowments, ordinary and extraordinary [1]. And they were indeed the chief perſons and champions of the Chriſtian cauſe in thoſe days; the Paſtors, Biſhops, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church. Yet none of theſe *Venerable Saints* have any where affirmed, that either they themſelves, or the Apoſtolic Fathers before them, were indued with any power of working miracles, but declare onely in general, “ that “ ſuch powers were actually ſubſiſting in their “ days, and openly exerted in the Church; “ that they had often ſeen the wonderful effects “ of them; and that every body elſe might ſee “ the ſame, whenever they pleaſed:” but as to the perſons, who wrought them, they leave us ſtrangely in the dark; for inſtead of ſpecifying their names, conditions, or characters, their general ſtyle is, “ ſuch and ſuch works are done “ among us, or by us; by our people; by a “ few; by many; by our Exorciſts: by igno- “ rant laymen, women, boys, and any ſim- “ ple Chriſtian whatſoever:” but in the particular caſe of *caſting out Devils, Origen* expreſsly ſays, *that it was performed generally by laymen* [2]. Agreeably to which Mr. *Whiſton* declares, “ that “ this gift, which he ranks amongſt the great- “ eſt of miracles, was wholly appropriated by “ our Saviour, to the meaner ſort of Chriſtians, “ with an excluſion even of the Clergy, ſo

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[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 143, 160, 169.

[2] ὡς ἐπίπαν γὰρ ἰδιῶται τὸ τοιοῦτον πράττουσι. Con. Celſ. vii. 334.

" that, after the days of the Apoſtles, none of " the ſacred order ever pretended to it [1].

But of what condition ſoever the actors were, it is certain, that in the performance of their miracles, they were always charged with fraud and impoſture by their adverſaries. *Lucian* tells us, *that whenever any crafty Juggler, expert in his trade, and who knew how to make a right uſe of things, went over to the Chriſtians, he was ſure to grow rich immediately, by making a prey of their ſimplicity* [2]. And *Celſus* repreſents all the Chriſtian wonder-workers, as mere vagabonds and common cheats, " who rambled " about to play their tricks at fairs and mar" kets; not in the circles of the wiſer and bet" ter ſort, for among ſuch they never ventured " to appear; but wherever they obſerved a ſet " of raw young fellows, ſlaves or fools, there " they took care to intrude themſelves and to " diſplay all their arts [3]." *Cæcilius* alſo calls them, *a lurking nation*; *ſhunning the light*; *mute in public*; *prating in corners* [4].

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[1] See his Account of the Dæmoniacs, p. 52, 53, 57.

[2] Ἢν τοίνυν παρέλθῃ τις εἰς αὐτοὺς γόης, ϗ τεχνίτης ἄνθρωπος, ϗ πράγμασι χρῆσθαι δυνάμενος, αὐτίκα μάλα πλούσιος ἐν βραχεῖ ἐγένετο, ἰδιώταις ἀνθρώποις ἐγχανών. De Mort. Pereg. T. ii. p. 568. Ed. Var.

[3] Ὁ δὲ γόητας ἡμᾶς καλεῖ, καί φησιν ὅτι φεύγομεν τοὺς χαριεστέρους [illegible], ὡς οὐκ ἑτοίμους ἀπατᾶσθαι, παλεύομεν δὲ τοὺς ἀγροικοτέρους. &c. Orig. con. Celſ. l vi p. 284. vid. it. l. iii. p. 141.

[4] Latebroſa & lucifuga natio; in publicum muta; in angulis garrula, &c. Minuc. Fel. p. 7.

The ſame charge was conſtantly urged againſt them by all the other enemies of the Chriſtian Faith, *Julian*, *Porphyry*, &c. of whom Dr. *Waterland* however has taken occaſion to declare, *that they had ſome regard to truth*, *in what they ſaid*, *and to public report*, *and to their own characters* [1]. But as this ſeems to have been an haſty and inconſiderate conceſſion, made to ſerve a particular point, which he was then urging, that *the antient Infidels were better men than the moderns*, ſo I ſhall lay no ſtreſs upon it, but obſerve onely on the whole, that from theſe ſhort hints and characters of the primitive wonder-workers, as given both by friends and enemies, we may fairly conclude; that the celebrated gifts of thoſe ages were generally engroſſed and exerciſed by private Chriſtians, chiefly of the layety; who uſed to travel about from City to City, to aſſiſt the ordinary Paſtors of the Church, and Preachers of the Goſpel, in the converſion of the Pagans, by the extraordinary gifts with which they were ſuppoſed to be indued by the ſpirit of God, and the miraculous works, which they pretended to perform.

And here again, we ſee a diſpenſation of things aſcribed to God, quite different from that, which we meet with in the New Teſtament.

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[1] "I know not whether "*Celſus*, *Porphyry*, or *Julian*, "would have ſaid ſuch a "thing, in the greateſt extremity of their rage. They "had ſome regard to truth "and to public report, and "to their own characters." Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 426.

ment. For in thoſe days, the power of working miracles was committed to none but the Apoſtles, and to a few of the moſt eminent of the other diſciples, who were particularly commiſſioned to propagate the Goſpel, and preſide in the Church of Chriſt: but upon the pretended revival of the ſame powers in the following ages, we find the adminiſtration of them committed, not to thoſe, who were inſtructed with the government of the Church; not to the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, to the Biſhops, the Martyrs, or the principal Champions of the Chriſtian cauſe; but *to boys*, *to women*, and above all, *to private and obſcure laymen*, not onely of an inferior but ſometimes alſo of *a bad character* [1]. But if thoſe venerable Saints and Martyrs were not indued with them when living, they had amends made to them when dead, if we can believe the reports of their ſucceſſors, by a profuſion of them on their bones and reliques: which ſuggeſts a farther cauſe of ſuſpecting the faith and judgment of thoſe early ages. For how can we think it credible, that God ſhould withhold his diſtinguiſhing favors from his faithful ſervants when living, to beſtow them on their rotten bones? or employ his extraordinary power to no other uſe, but to perpetuate a manifeſt impoſture in his Church? ſince it is to thoſe ancient tales, ſo gravely atteſted, of miracles wrought *by the bones of Saints and Martyrs*, that the Church of *Rome* owes all that trade, which ſhe ſtill draws, from the ſame fund and treaſure of her wonder-working reliques: and if we can believe ſuch ſtories, as they are delivered to us by the Primitive writers, we cannot condemn a practice, which is evidently grounded upon them.

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[1] Νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δι' ἀναξίων ἐνεργεῖν ὁ Θεὸς εἴωθε. Chryſoſt. T. iii: p. 66. c. Edit. Benedict.

Adjicient præterea multa de auctoritate cujuſque Doctoris Hæretici; illos maxime doctrinæ ſuæ fidem confirmaſſe, mortuos ſuſcitaſſe, debiles reformaſſe, futura ſignificaſſe, ut merito Apoſtoli crederentur. Tertull. De præſcript. Hæreticor. § 44.

Ἐκεῖνο δὲ προστίθεμεν τῷ λόγῳ, ὅτι οὔτε πᾶς ὁ προφητεύων, ὅσιος, οὔτε πᾶς ὁ δαίμονας ἐλαύνων. Conſtitut. Apoſtol, l. viii. c. 2.

Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam ſceleratos homines facere, qualia ſancti facere non poſſunt. Auguſt. Oper. T. vi. p. 71.

Theſe things, I ſay, are ſo ſtrange, as to give juſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that there was ſome original fraud in the caſe; and that thoſe ſtrolling wonder-workers, by a dexterity of juggling, which art, not Heaven, had taught them, impoſed upon the credulity of the pious Fathers, whoſe ſtrong prejudices and ardent zeal for the intereſt of Chriſtianity, would diſpoſe them to embrace, without examination, whatever ſeemed to promote ſo good a cauſe. That this was really the caſe in ſome inſtances, is certain and notorious: and that it was ſo in all, will appear ſtill more probable, when we have conſidered, in the next place, the particular characters of the ſeveral Fathers, on whoſe teſtimony the credit of thoſe wonderful narratives depends.

III. The authority of a writer, who affirms any quæſtionable fact, muſt depend on the character of his veracity and of his judgement. As far as we are aſſured of the one, ſo far are we aſſured, that he does not willingly deçeive us; and from our good opinion of the other, we perſuade ourſelves, that he was not deceived himſelf: but in proportion as there is reaſon to doubt of either, there will always be reaſon to doubt, of the truth of what he delivers. Nay, in many caſes, the want of judgement alone has all the ſame effect, as the want of veracity too, towards invalidating the teſtimony of a witneſs: eſpecially in caſes of an extraordinary, or miraculous nature; where the weakneſs of men is the moſt liable to be impoſed upon; and the more ſo, as it happens to be joined to the greater piety and ſimplicity of manners. Since this then is the ſole rule of determining the meaſure of credit, which is due to a witneſs of any ſtrange and quæſtionable facts, I ſhall apply it to the caſe before us; and examine what proofs of a ſound judgement and ſtrict veracity are to be found in the writings of thoſe Fathers, who atteſt the miraculous ſtories which we are now conſidering.

As to the Apoſtolic Fathers, of whom I have ſpoken above, ſince they have contributed but little towards the illuſtration of the preſent quæſtion, and bear no direct teſtimony in it; or none at leaſt, but what confirms the point which

I am defending; there is no reaſon to enter into the conſideration of their particular characters. Their works, as I have ſaid, are tranſlated into *Engliſh*, ſo that every one may judge of them for himſelf. They appear to have been men of great piety, integrity, and ſimplicity: and that is all, I think, which we need to declare of them on this occaſion.

Juſtin Martyr comes next, whoſe genius will beſt be illuſtrated by ſome ſpecimens of it, extracted from his writings. We have ſeen above, that among the indowments conferred in an extraordinary manner on the Primitive Chriſtians, *the gift of expounding the holy Scriptures*, or the *myſteries of God*, was reckoned one: and this, as *Juſtin* frequently affirms, *was granted by the ſpecial grace of God to himſelf* [1]. Let us inquire then, what uſe he made of this divine gift: and if ever he was really inlightened by it, we might ſurely expect to find the effects of it there, where he is diſcourſing *on the myſtery of the Croſs*; which he declares to be the greateſt ſymbol of power and dominion, and explanes in the following manner: "Conſider, ſays he, all the " things in the world, whether they could be " adminiſtered, or have any communication " with each other, without this form of the " Croſs. The Sea could not be paſſed, unleſs " that trophy called the ſail were preſerved in

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[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν ὖν ἡμῖν πάντα ὅσα ϗ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτȣ͂ νενοήκαμεν. Dial. par. ii. p. 352. Οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναμις ἐμοὶ τοιαύτη τίς ἐϛὶν, ἀλλὰ χάρις παρὰ Θεȣ͂ μόνη εἰς τὸ συνιέναι τὰς γραφὰς αὐτȣ͂ ἐδόθη μοι. Ib. p.258.

" the ſhip: the earth could not be tilled without " it: for neither diggers nor artificers could do " their work, but by inſtruments of this ſhape. " The form of man differs in nothing elſe from " other animals, but in the erection of his body, " and the extenſion of his arms, and the pro" jection of his noſe from the forehead, through " which reſpiration is made, and which ſhews " nothing elſe but the figure of the croſs: in " which ſenſe alſo it is ſpoken of by the Pro" phet; *Chriſt the Lord is the breath before our* " *face* [1]." Upon this paſſage the very pious and learned Dr. *Grabe* makes the following remarks, which I would recommend to all the zealous admirers of theſe *venerable Saints* and *pureſt ages*; " *that the holy Martyr muſt not be* " *raſhly blamed, for an interpretation ſo forced and* " *far-fetched*; *becauſe it was the prevailing cuſtom* " *of that age, to import into the ſacred text ſenſes,* " *which did not belong to it* [2]."

Again; " Hear, ſays *Juſtin*, how Chriſt, af" ter he was crucified, fulfilled the ſymbol of " the tree of life in Paradiſe, and of all the other " things, which were to happen afterwards to " the righteous. For *Moſes* was ſent with a

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[1] Κατανοήσατε γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, εἰ ἄνευ τοῦ σχήματος τούτου διοικεῖσθαι, ἢ κοινωνίαν ἔχειν δύναται, &c. Apol. i. p. 82.

[2] Alium autem ſenſum tradit hoc loco *Juſtinus*, qui nimis longe quidem petitus videtur: nec tamen S. Martyr idcirco temere reprehendendus, quod mos iſtius ævi tam inter Judæos, quam Chriſtianos obtinuerit, ſacro textui haud innatos ſenſus ſubinferre. Vid. not. (29) ad Juſtin. ibid.

" rod, to redeem his people; with this rod he " divided the ſea; brought water out of the " rock; and with a piece of wood, made the " bitter water ſweet. *Jacob* alſo with ſticks, " made his uncle *Laban's* ſheep bring forth ſuch " lambs, as were to be his own again," *&c* [1]. And ſo he goes on, in this way of alluſion, to apply all the ſticks and pieces of wood in the Old Teſtament to the Croſs of Chriſt: and purſuing the ſame argument in another place, where he is deſcribing the fight of the *Iſraelites* with *Amalek*, he ſays, " that when the ſon of " *Nun*, called *Jeſus*, led the people on to battel, " *Moſes* employed himſelf in prayer, with his " hands ſtretched out in the form of a Croſs; " that as long as he continued in that poſture, " *Amalek* was beaten; but when he remitted " any thing of it, his own people ſuffered; and " that all this was owing to the power of the " Croſs: for the people did not conquer, be" cauſe *Moſes* prayed, but becauſe, while the " name of *Jeſus* was at the head of the battel, " *Moſes* was exhibiting the figure of the " Croſs [2]." It would be endleſs to run thro' all the interpretations of the ſame kind, which are to be found in this Father; ſince his works are but little elſe than a wretched collection of them: the pure flights of an enthuſiaſtic fancy and heated brain, which no man in his ſober ſenſes could miſtake for divine revelations. Yet as abſurd as they now appear to be, this pious Father inſiſts, that they were all ſuggeſted to him from Heaven; and appeals to the *Jews* themſelves, againſt whom he was applying them, *whether they thought it poſſible for him, to acquire ſo perfect a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, if he had not received from the author of them, the grace or gift to underſtand them* [1]. What credit then can be due to this Father, in the report of other people's gifts and inſpirations, who was ſo groſsly deceived himſelf, or willing at leaſt to deceive others, in this confident atteſtation of his own? Dr. *Cave* tells us, that *Juſtin was wholly ignorant of the Hebrew tongue*; which was the cauſe of his childiſh blunders, whenever he meddled with it. "Every one, ſays he, who has dipped but "ever ſo little into that tongue, knows, that "*Satan* in the *Hebrew* ſignifies an adverſary: "but ſee the ridiculous interpretation of *Juſtin:* "He is called *Satanas*, ſays the Martyr; a "name compounded agreeably to his nature, of "*Sata*, which ſignifies an Apoſtate, and *Nas*, a "Serpent," *&c* [2]. But for a farther illuſtra-

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[1] Ὅτι δὲ, μετὰ τὸ σταυρωθῆναι τοῦτον —— σύμβολον εἶχε τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ πεφυτεῦσθαι ἐλέλεκτο, καὶ τῶν γενησομένων πᾶσι τοῖς δικαίοις, ἀκούσατε, &c. Id. Dial. par. ii. p. 325, 326.

[2] Οὐ γαρ ὅτι, οὕτως ηὔχετο Μωσῆς, διὰ τοῦτο κρείσσων ὁ λαὸς ἐγίνετο, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι —— αὐτὸς τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐποίει. Ibid. p. 336.

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[1] Οἴεσθε ἂν ἡμᾶς ποτὲ, ὦ ἄνδρες, νενοηκέναι δυνηθῆναι ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ταῦτα, εἰ μὴ θελήματι τοῦ θελήσαντος αὐτὰ ἐλάβομεν χάριν τοῦ νοῆσαι. Dial. par. ii. p. 390.

[2] Litterarum Hebraicarum rudem penitus & imperitum fuiſſe, *Juſtino* vitio verti non debet, *&c.*—Hinc factum eſt, ut in Hebræis adeo pueriliter lapſus ſit. Exemplum dabo, *&c.* Cave Hiſt. Litter. p. 61. Edit. ult.

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tion of his character, I ſhall give an inſtance or two of the doctrines which he teaches, as orthodox and apoſtolical, as well as of the facts, which he aſſerts, as certain and unquæſtionable.

He declares, that all the Chriſtians, who were in all points orthodox, embraced and believed the doctrine of the *millennium:* "that all the "Saints ſhould be raiſed in the fleſh, and reign "with *Chriſt* in *Jeruſalem*, enlarged and beauti-"fied in a wonderful manner for their recep-"tion, in the enjoyment of all ſenſual pleaſures, "for a thouſand years before the general reſur-"rection [1]." Which doctrine he deduces from the teſtimony of the Prophets and of St. *John* the Apoſtle; and was followed in it by the Fathers of the ſecond and third centuries: yet the doctrine itſelf was afterwards exploded, as it well deſerved, not onely as abſurd and monſtrous, but as impious and heretical. St. *Jerom* treats it as a mere fable, or *dream of the Jews, and Judaizing Chriſtians.* Yet from the authority of thoſe Fathers, who aſſerted it, and the credit which it had obtained with the generality of Chriſtians, he foreſaw, as he tells us, *what a furious ſtorm he ſhould raiſe againſt himſelf by that freedom* [2]. The ſure fate of all thoſe, who, in

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[1] Εγὼ δὲ ϗ εἴ τινές εἰσιν ὀρθογνώμονες κατὰ πάντα Χριστιανοὶ, ϗ σαρκὸς ἀνάστασιν γενήσεσθαι ἐπιστάμεθα, ϗ χίλια ἔτη ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ, οἰκοδομηθείσῃ, ϗ κοσμηθείσῃ, ϗ πλατυνθείσῃ, &c. Dial. par. ii. p. 313.

[2] Quæ qui recipiunt, mille quoque annorum fabulam & terrenum Salvatoris imperium Judaico errore ſuſcipient.—Comment. in Iſa. c. xxx. Oper. Tom. III. p. 262. Edit. Benedict.

any age of the Church, from the earlieſt times down to the preſent, have had the virtue and courage to attack any popular error, or reigning ſuperſtition.

He aſſerts another doctrine full as monſtrous; "that God having created the world, committed the care of it to Angels; who tranſgreſſing their duty, fell in love with women, and begot children on them, whom we call Dæmons; who ſubdued mankind to their power; partly by magical writings; partly by terrors, and puniſhments; and partly by the inſtitution of ſacrifices, fumes, and libations; of which they began preſently to ſtand in need, after they had enſlaved themſelves to their luſts and paſſions, *&c.* [1]." And in another place, "the truth, ſays he, ſhall come out; that evil Dæmons of old debauched women and corrupted boys, and ſpread terrors among men; who did not examine things by reaſon; but ſeized with fear, and not knowing, that theſe Dæmons were evil ſpirits, called them Gods, and gave every one that name, which they had each taken to themſelves. But when *Socrates* by true reaſon endeavoured to expoſe

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Ex quo diſcimus mille annorum fabulam, in qua rurſum nuptiæ promittuntur, & cibi & terrenæ vitæ converſatio, adjiciendam. Ibid. p. 436.

Ut præſaga mente jam cernam, quantorum in me rabies concitanda ſit. Ibid. p. 478.

[1] Οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι, παραβάντες τήνδε τὴν τάξιν, γυναικῶν μίξεσιν ἡττήθησαν, καὶ παῖδας ἐτέκνωσαν, οἵ εἰσιν οἱ λεγόμενοι δαίμονες, &c. Apol. ii. p. 112.

“ their practices, and draw men away from their “ worſhip, they, by the help of wicked men, “ took care to get him put to death, as an “ Atheiſt and impious perſon [1].”

He profeſſes likewiſe the higheſt regard for certain ſpurious books, which were publiſhed under the names of the *Sibyl* and *Hyſtaſpis*; which he treats with the ſame reverence as the Prophetic Scriptures; appeals to them as divine, and ſays, that “ *by the contrivance of Dæ-* “ *mons, it was made a capital crime to read them,* “ in order to deter men from coming at the “ knowledge of what was good, and keep them “ ſtill in ſubjection to themſelves: which yet, “ adds he, they were not able to effect: for we “ not onely read them freely without fear, but “ offer them alſo, as you ſee, to your peruſal; “ knowing, that they will be found acceptable “ to all [2].” And it is certain, that from this example and authority of *Juſtin*, theſe ſilly writings were held in the higheſt veneration by the Fathers and rulers of the Church, through all ſucceding ages.

Clemens of Alexandria ſuppoſes them to have been inſpired by God, in the ſame manner as the

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[1] Εἰρήσεται γὰρ τ' ἀληθές. ἐπεὶ τὸ πάλαιον δαίμονες φαῦλοι ἐπιφανείας ποιησάμενοι, ϗ γυναῖκας ἐμοίχευσαν ϗ παῖδας διέφθειραν, &c. Ib. Apol. i. p. 10.

[2] Καὶ Σίβυλλα δὲ ϗ Ὑστάσπης, γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἔφασαν. Apol. i. p. 30.

Κατ' ἐνέργειαν δὲ τῶν φαύλων δαιμόνων, θάνατος ὡρίσθη κατὰ τῶν τὰς Ὑστάσπου, ἢ Σιβύλλης, ἢ τῶν προφητῶν βίβλους ἀναγινωσκόντων, &c. Ib. p. 67.

Prophets of the Old Teſtament: which he confirms by the authority both of St. *Peter* and of St. *Paul*, whom he cites as appealing to them, for a prediction of the life and character of *Jeſus*. “ For as God, ſays *Clemens*, out of his de- “ ſire to ſave the *Jews*, gave them Prophets, ſo “ raiſing up Prophets alſo to the *Greeks*, from “ their own nation and language, as far as they “ were capable of receiving that good gift of “ God, he ſeparated them from the vulgar, as “ not onely the Preaching of *Peter*, but the “ Apoſtle *Paul* alſo declares, ſpeaking thus; “ *Take the Greek books into your hands, and look* “ *into the* Sibyl, *how clearly ſhe ſpeaks of one God,* “ *and of the things to come: then take* Hyſtaſpes “ *alſo and read, and you will find the Son of God* “ *much more clearly and evidently deſcribed: and* “ *that many Kings ſhall employ all their forces* “ *againſt Chriſt, out of their hatred to him, and to* “ *all who bear his name* [1].”

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[1] Clem. Alex. Strom. l. vi. p. 761. Edit. Ox. The *Preaching of Peter*, Κήρυγμα Πέτρου, was the title of a ſpurious book, aſcribed to that Apoſtle: which is often cited as genuin by *Clemens*, *Origen*, and the other Fathers, and was forged probably in the age immediately ſucceding to that of the Apoſtles. [Vid. Cave Hiſt. Litt. vol. i. p. 6. it. Grab. Spicil. Patr. T. i. p. 62.] The paſſage alſo cited here from St. *Paul*, was taken from ſome other ſpurious piece now unknown, which then paſſed for the work of that Apoſtle. [Vid. Not. ad loc. Clem.] *Hyſtaſpes* is called by *Lactantius*, a *moſt ancient King of the Medes*: [l. vii. c. 16.] and by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *the Father of Darius*: and is ſaid to have been a maſter of all

The heathens, on the other hand, charged the Chriſtians with the forgery of theſe books, and gave the title of *Sibylliſts*, by way of contempt, to thoſe, who held them to be divine[1]. Which charge the Fathers conſtantly denied and treated as a pure calumny [2]: Yet all the Critics of theſe days allow the fact to be true, and conſider it, as one of the pious frauds of

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the doctrine of the *Magi*, Vid. Amm. Marc. l. xxiii. c. vi. & Not. Valeſ.

[1] *Origen*, ſpeaking of *Celſus* ſays; Εἶπε δέ τινας εἶναι ϗ Σιβυλλιστὰς, etc. Cont. Celſ. l. v. 272.

[2] *Celſus* having charged the Chriſtians with inſerting many blaſphemous paſſages into the verſes of the *Sibyl*, *Origen* obſerves in anſwer to him, *that he had neither produced any paſſages, ſo inſerted, nor any antient and correct copies of the verſes themſelves, which wanted ſuch paſſages; which he ought to have done, if he had been able.* [l. vii. 369.] This indeed was, to put the controverſy upon a right foot; by which, however, as the learned *Valeſius* remarks, *Celſus might eaſily have made good his charge, and detected the forgery.* [Not. in Euſeb. Vit. Conſtant. p. 700. Edit. Cant.] If he did not therefore produce any old copies, which wanted the paſſages in quæſtion, the reaſon of it muſt be, that he either thought it unneceſſary, in a caſe ſo manifeſt, or that the books themſelves were not eaſy to be found.

The ſucceding Fathers treat the ſame objection in a manner wholly equivocal and evaſive. *Lactantius*, after he has alledged many verſes from the *Sibyl*, in which the principal acts and miracles of *Jeſus* are circumſtantially deſcribed, ſays; "thoſe, who are confuted by "theſe teſtimonies, uſually "fly to this ſhift, of declar-"ing theſe verſes, not to be "the *Sibyl's*, but forged and "compoſed by our people: "which no man will believe, "who has read *Cicero* and "*Varro*, and the reſt of the "antient writers, who make "mention of the *Erythræan* "and the other *Sibyls*, and "who were all dead before thoſe primitive ages. *There is no man*, ſays Dr. *Cave, who does not ſee, that they were forged for* “ Chriſt was born.” [De Ver. Sap. l. iv. 15.] The four following verſes, cited from the *Sibyl* by *Lactantius*, will ſerve as a ſpecimen of the reſt.

Εἰν ἄρτοις ἅμα πέντε ϗ ἰχθύεσσι δυοῖσιν
Ἀνδρῶν χιλιάδας ἐν ἐρήμῳ πέντε κορέσσει.
Καὶ τὰ περισσεύοντα λαβὼν μετὰ κλάσματα πάντα,
Δώδεκα πληρώσει κοφίνους εἰς ἐλπίδα πολλῶν.

With five loaves and two fiſhes
He will ſatisfy five thouſand men in the deſert.
Then gathering up the fragments, which remain,
He will fill twelve baſkets for the confirmation of many.

Euſebius has preſerved an *Acroſtick* ſaid to have been taken from the *Erythræan Sibyl*; in which the initial letters of each line compoſe the following greek words, Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς, Θεοῦ Ὑιὸς, Σωτὴρ, Σταυρός. *Jeſus Chriſt, Son of God, Saviour, Croſs*. He tells us however, “ that many people, though they allowed the *Erythræan Sibyl* to have been a *Propheteſs*, yet rejected this *Acroſtick*, ſuſpecting it to have been forged by the Chriſtians— but the truth, adds he, is manifeſt: and our people have been ſo exact in computing the times, as to leave no room to imagine, that the verſes were made after the coming of Chriſt, and falſely ſent abroad, as the predictions of the *Sibyl*. For it is agreed by all, that *Cicero* had read this poem, which he tranſlated into the latin tongue, and inſerted into his own works.” [Vid. Conſtant. p. 700. Ed. Cant.] Now the ſole ground of this confident aſſertion is, that *Cicero* ſpeaking of certain verſes, aſcribed to the *Sibyl*, which had really been forged by the partiſans of *J. Cæſar*, to ſerve a political deſign, after he has ridiculed the verſes themſelves, and the purpoſe of them, intimates, that they were compoſed in the form of an *Acroſtick*, *which was a work of labor and attention, not of madneſs* *the advancement of the Chriſtian faith* [1]. Some impute the Fraud to *Hermas*; ſome to *Papias*; and others to *Juſtin* himſelf. Mr. *Blondel* and Mr. *Dodwell* charge it upon the Heretics, called

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or ecſtaſy, and could not therefore come from the Sibyl. Div. ii. 54.

St. *Auſtin* has given us a latin tranſlation of the ſame *Acroſtick*, which he introduces thus; “The *Erythræan Sibyl* has indeed written ſome things clearly and manifeſtly relating to Chriſt; which I have read in the latin tongue, tho' in bad verſes, thro' the unſkilfulneſs of the tranſlator, as I afterwards underſtood. For *Flaccianus*, an eminent perſon, who had been Proconſul; a man of flowing eloquence and great learning; as we were converſing together on the ſubject of Chriſt, produced a greek book, being the verſes, he ſaid, of the *Erythræan Sibyl*, where he ſhewed in a certain place, how the initial letters of each verſe were manag'd ſo, as to form the words, Ἰησοῦς, Χριστὸς, &c.” [De Civ. Dei, xviii. 23.] But the ſame Father declares in another place, that *there were ſome, who ſuſpected all thoſe prophecies, which related to Chriſt, and paſſed under the name of the Sibyl*, to have been forged by the Chriſtians [ib. c. xlvi.] Upon which the learned Editor of his works, *Ludovicus Vives*, remarks, *that they could not be forged, becauſe they are cited both by Lactantius and Euſebius.* [Not. in loc.] Thus a moſt groſs and palpable forgery was impoſed upon the Chriſtian world, from the very midſt of thoſe beſt and pureſt ages; which tho' rejected and derided from the beginning by all men of ſenſe among the Heathens, yet obtained full credit in the Church, thro' all ages, without any other ground to ſupport it, but the utility of the deceit, and the authority of thoſe venerable Fathers, who contrived and atteſted it.

[1] Hadriano imperante, forſan circa ann. 136. nata videntur.— Conficta eſſe, idque in gratiam Chriſtanæ fidei nemo non videt. Cave Hiſt. Litt. Vol. i. p. 57. Edit. Oxon.

Montaniſts; but by a groſs miſtake, as Dr. *Cave* obſerves, ſince *Montanus* was not in being, till forty years after the *Sibylline books* were known to the world [1].

Juſtin affirms alſo that ſilly ſtory, concerning the *Septuagint verſion* of the Old Teſtament. "That it was made by ſeventy Elders ſent for "that purpoſe from *Jeruſalem* to *Ægypt*, at the "requeſt of King *Ptolemy*: whom that King "ſhut up in as many ſeparate cells, and obliged "them, each to tranſlate the whole Bible apart, "and without any communication with each "other: yet all their ſeveral tranſlations were "found to agree verbatim from the beginning "to the end; and by that means were demon-"ſtrated to be of divine inſpiration." And to raiſe the greater attention to his ſtory, he introduces it, by declaring, "that he is not telling us "a fable or forged tale; but that he himſelf "had ſeen at *Alexandria* the remains of thoſe "very cells, in which the Tranſlators had been ſhut up [2]." But repeating the ſame ſtory in his Apology, he makes an unhappy Blunder, by ſaying, that *King* Ptolomy's *meſſage to beg the aſſiſtance of thoſe ſeventy tranſlators, was ſent to* Herod, *King of* Jeruſalem; whereas *Herod* happened to live about three hundred years later than *Ptolemy* [1]. Dr. *Grabe* endeavours to excuſe *Juſtin* by the help of a forced criticiſm, which the ingenious Editor of *Juſtin's* Apology, with good reaſon derides; ſince this pious Father was certainly guilty here of that weakneſs, againſt which St. *Paul* warned both *Timothy* and *Titus*, of *giving too much heed to profane,* Jewiſh, *and old woman's fables* [2]; and furniſhes a pregnant inſtance, how eaſily his prejudices might impoſe upon him in all other caſes of the like nature.

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[1] Vid. Cave ib. p. 58. it. Dodwell. Diſſertation. Cyprian. 4. § x.

[2] Ταῦτα οὐ μῦθος ὑμῖν, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἕλληνες, οὐδὲ πεπλασμένας ἱστορίας ἀπαγγέλλομεν. ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ γενόμενοι, καὶ τὰ ἴχνη τῶν οἰκίσκων ἐν τῇ Φάρῳ ἑωρακότες ἔτι σωζόμενα, &c. Cohort. ad Græc. p. 14.

To theſe ſpecimens of his want of judgment, I might add ſeveral more, from his frequent uſe of *fabulous* and *apochryphal books*, forged by the firſt Chriſtians, under the names of the Apoſtles; and likewiſe from his falſe and negligent manner of quoting the genuine ſcriptures. Dr. *Grabe* has collected ſeveral inſtances of the firſt ſort [3]; and his learned Editor finds frequent occaſion to animadvert upon the ſecond [4].

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that theſe inſtances ſhew indeed a weakneſs of judgment, yet do not impeach the veracity of *Juſtin*, as a witneſs of fact. With regard to which, we muſt call to mind, what is hinted above, that the want of judgment alone may, in ſome caſes, diſqualify a man as effectually, from being a good witneſs, as if he wanted veracity too. For example, *Juſtin* expreſsly affirms, *that he had ſeen the cells, in which the ſeventy were ſhut up to the taſk of tranſlating the Bible.* Now it is certain, that there never were any ſuch cells, nor any ſuch tranſlators: and the beſt excuſe, which can be made for him is, that he was impoſed upon by ſome *Jews* or *Chriſtians* of *Alexandria*, who might ſhew him ſome old ruins, under the name of Cells, which his prepoſſeſſion in favor of the ſtory, owing to his natural credulity and want of judgement, made him take to be really ſuch.

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[1] Ὅτι δὲ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Αἰγυπτίων βασιλεὺς — προσέπεμψε τῷ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τότε βασιλεύοντι Ἡρώδῃ &c. Apol. i. p. 49. vid. Not. 8, 9.

[2] 1 Tim. iv. 7. Tit. i. 14. See Ant. Van Dale Diſſert. de Ariſt. p. 146.

[3] Vid. Grabe Spicileg. Patr. Tom. i. p. 14. 327. it. p. 19.

[4] Vid. Juſt. Apol. i. p. 87. quæ diſputat. de feris venenoſis &c. in deſerto. it. p. 92. Not. 6. it. p. 206. Not. 20. it. p. 203. Not. 16. it. Not. 18. p. 327.

Again, in his Apology, addreſſed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, he charges them with paying divine honors to the Heretic and Impoſtor *Simon*, of *Samaria*, commonly called the *Magician:* and for the truth of his charge, appeals to a Statue, then ſubſiſting in *Rome*, and publicly dedicated to that *Simon* in the iſland of the *Tiber*, with this Inſcription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO [1]. But it is manifeſt beyond all reaſonable doubt, as ſome learned men have ſhewn, that *Juſtin* was led here into a groſs blunder, by his uſual want of judgement and knowledge of *Roman* affairs, and his pre-conceived belief of certain fabulous ſtories, which paſſed current about this *Simon* among the firſt Chriſtians [1]; for the Statue and Inſcription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his Countryman, *Simon Magus*, of whoſe Deification there is not the leaſt hint in any *Roman* writer, but to a *Sabine Deity*, of ancient worſhip in *Rome*, and of ſimilar name, SEMONI SANCO [2], frequently mentioned by the old Writers: as the inſcription itſelf, dug up, about two centuries ago, from the ruins of that very place, or little iſland, which *Juſtin* deſcribes, has clearly demonſtrated [3].

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[1] Ὡς ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος — θεὸς ἐνομίσθη καὶ ἀνδριάντι παρ' ὑμῶν ὡς θεὸς τετίμηται. ὃς ἀνδρίας ἀνεγήγερται ἐν τῷ Τίβερι ποταμῷ, μεταξὺ τῶν δύο γεφυρῶν, ἔχων ἐπιγραφὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν ταύτην, Σίμωνι Δέῳ Σάγκτῳ. Apol. i. p. 39.

Juſtin was followed in the belief and aſſertion of this fact by all the ſucceeding Fathers. *Irenæus, Tertullian, Auguſtinus, Epiphanius, Euſebius.*

Now ſhould we allow theſe caſes, to be clear of any fraud or deſign to deceive; yet they yield ſo bad a ſample of his underſtanding, as to render his teſtimony of very little weight in any other relation whatſoever. For if he was deceived in ſuch plain and obvious facts, where a common diſcernment and moderate knowledge of hiſtory, would have enabled him to have diſcovered the truth, how much the more eaſily would he be caught by a confederacy of ſubtle and crafty Impoſtors, employing all their arts to amaze and dazzle the ſenſes of the credulous, and to put off their ſurprizing tricks, for the miraculous effects of a divine power?

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[1] Vid. Ant. Van Dale de Statua Simoni Mago erecta, Diſſertat.

[2] *Sancus*, as *Dionyſius* writes, was a Deity of the old Sabines, whom ſome called Δία ϖίστιον. [Vid. Dionyſ. Hal. Antiq. l. ii. 49. it. iv. 58.] and the Romans *Deum Fidium*. And *Semones* ſignified the ſame as Ημιθεοι, Demigods or Heroes deified. *Livy* mentions a Chapel of *Semo Sancus* in *Rome* — to whom the goods of certain enemies were conſecrated — bona Semoni Sanco conſuerunt conſecranda poſiti —— in Sacello Sanci verſus ædem Quirini. Liv. viii. 20.

[3] SEMONI
SANCO
DEO FIDIO
SACRVM.
&c.

Gruter. Vol. i. p. XCVI. 5. where there are ſeveral more Inſcriptions to the ſame Deity.

I cannot diſmiſs this Father, without taking notice of an accuſation, which he frequently brings againſt the *Jews*, *that they had expunged many paſſages out of the* Greek *Bibles, in which the character and ſufferings of* Jeſus *were clearly deſcribed:* which charge all the learned of theſe later ages have found to be wholly groundleſs. Let us ſee then how he ſupports it. "They "have eraſed, ſays he, out of the book of *Eſdras*, the following words; *Eſdras* ſaid to the "people, this paſſover is our Saviour, and our "refuge; and if you will but perſuade your"ſelves, and be convinced in your hearts, that "we are to humble him in a ſign or figure, and "afterwards to put our truſt in him; this place "ſhall not be made deſolate to all ages, ſays "the Lord of Hoſts. But if you do not believe "on him, nor attend to his preaching, you "ſhall be as dirt to the nations [1]." The

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[1] Ἀπὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἐξηγήσεων ὧν ἐξηγήσατο Ἔσδρας εἰς τὸν νόμον τὸν περὶ τοῦ πάσχα. τὴν ἐξήγησιν ταύτην ἀφείλοντο, &c. Dial. 292.

Editor of *Juſtin* remarks here, that this paſſage is not to be found, in any copies either of the *Apocbryphal* or *Canonical Eſdras*; nor in any other Chriſtian writer, but *Lactantius:* and inſtead of being expunged by the *Jews*, *appears to have been forged by the Chriſtians*: where he refers us to the cenſure of an able Critic and Proteſtant Divine, *John Croius*; who charges the forgery on *Juſtin* himſelf, in the following words; "To propoſe what I think, freely and candidly; and what all honeſt and religious judges of theſe matters will allow to be true: I take this to have been a pious fraud of *Juſtin*, in which *Lactantius* followed him: who forged and publiſhed this paſſage, for the confirmation of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as well as the greateſt part of the *Sibylline Oracles*, and the Sentences of *Mercurius* [1].

Again, *Juſtin* affirms, that in the xcth Pſalm it was ſaid, *tell the nations that the Lord reigned from the tree:* and that the *Jews* had eraſed the words, *from the tree.* But as there is no footſtep of theſe words, either in the Vulgate, or any of the *Greek* or *Hebrew* copies, it is manifeſt, ſays the Editor, that *they were not expunged by the* Jews, *but added by the* Chriſtians [2]. Laſtly, he charges them *with expunging a paſſage of* Jeremiah, which yet he owns to be retained in ſome copies of their ſynagogues; as it actually is in all copies, both *Greek* and *Hebrew*, to this day. Upon which the Editor ſays, *that he abſolves the* Jews *again from all fraud, but cannot abſolve* Juſtin *from the utmoſt negligence and raſhneſs* [1]. So unlucky and injudicious was this Father, in his charge of theſe frauds on the *Jews*, as to give an occaſion only for fixing them, after all, upon the Chriſtians, and, in the opinion of ſome, even upon himſelf.

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[1] Sed ſatis patet ab aliquo Chriſtiano confićta eſſe, non a Judæis deleta.—Quod autem *Joannes Croius*, Obſervat. in N. T. p. 205. *Juſtinum* hujus fraudis artificem fuiſſe affirmat, in eo ſane non Martyris noſtri, in quem iſta ſuſpicio non cadit, ſed ſuam potius ipſius exiſtimationem lædit, &c. Vid. Not. ad loc.

[2] Manifeſtiſſimum tamen

The learned and ingenious Editor of his *Apologies* and *Dialogues*, who ſhews an inclination, to defend him on all occaſions, where he is defenſible, and on ſome, even where he is not, yet is often forced to break out into a kind of aſtoniſhment, at his ignorance, negligence, raſhneſs, credulity, ſo groſs in many inſtances, as to baffle all the art of criticiſm, nor to admit any certain rule, of collecting his real ſenſe, Yet *there are ſome ſtill*, ſays he, *who extol him, not onely as a moſt learned, but a moſt eloquent writer*[2].

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eſt, hæc verba —— non fuiſſe a Judæis reſecta, ſed ab aliquo Chriſtiano addita, &c. Not. ad Dial. p. 294.

[1] Καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν διὰ Ἰερεμίου λεχθέντων ταῦτα περιέκοψαν. Ib. 293.

Nos quoque Judæos fraudis abſolvimus, *Juſtinum* ſummæ negligentiæ & temeritatis abſolvere non poſſumus. Not. ad loc.

[2] Vid. Edit. Lond. 1722. & Clariſſimi Thirlbii Annotat. ad p. 130, 206, 293, 378, &c. Et tamen ſunt, qui hunc non tantum doctiſſimum, verum etiam eloquentiſſimum eſſe prædicant. p. 305.

Irenæus, whoſe character and doctrines come next to be conſidered, was, of all the Fathers, whoſe works ſtill remain to us, the moſt diligent collector and aſſertor of *Apoſtolic traditions.* And in truth, as far as his judgment and veracity may be relied upon, he ſeems to have been well qualified for that character; being acquainted, as he tells us, with ſeveral, who had converſed familiarly with the Apoſtles, and curious alſo to inform himſelf, of all the particular doctrines, which they had ever taught by word of mouth. "He lived, ſays Mr. *Dodwell*, "ſo near to the times of the Apoſtles, as to be "able, to tranſmit their doctrines to poſterity "with certainty and fidelity, as they were delivered to him by oral tradition, from their immediate Succeſſors and Diſciples [1]." Yet *Photius*, one of the ableſt Critics of his own, or any other age of the Church, has intimated a different character of him in the following ſhort cenſure upon his writings; in which, *he thought it neceſſary*, he ſays, *to advertiſe the reader, that in ſome of them, the purity of truth, with reſpect to Eccleſiaſtical doctrines, is adulterated by his falſe and ſpurious reaſonings* [2]. But the following inſtances of the doctrines which he delivers, as orthodox and *Apoſtolic*, will be the ſureſt rule of determining his real character, as well as the proper degree of credit, which may be due to his teſtimony.

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[1] Sufficit enim, ut Apoſtolorum tempora ita prope contigerit, ut quid ſenſerint Apoſtoli, poſſet orali traditione ad poſteros deducere, traditioniſque illius certus & fidelis eſſe teſtis. Diſſ. Iren. § 3.

[2] Phot. Bibl. c. cxx.

He affirms then, *that our Saviour lived to an old age, or was fifty years old at the leaſt*, at the time of his crucifixion; which he attempts to prove, firſt, from the reaſon of the thing; " that as " Chriſt came to ſave all men, of all ranks and " degrees, ſo it was neceſſary, that he ſhould " paſs through all the ſeveral ſtages of life, that " he might be a pattern to them all: 2*dly*, from " the unanimous tradition and poſitive teſti- " mony of all the old men, who had lived with " St. *John*, and the other Apoſtles, from whom, " he ſays, they all received this account, and " conſtantly bore witneſs to the truth of it [1]." Yet *this unanimous tradition*, ſo ſolemnly vouched by this venerable Father, is as certainly falſe, as the Goſpels are true. Dr. *Whitby*, after he has produced this ſame paſſage, cries out, as it were, with aſtoniſhment, " Behold here, according to

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[1] Sic & Senior in Senioribus, ut ſit perfectus Magiſter in omnibus, non ſolum ſecundum expoſitionem veritatis, ſed & ſecundum ætatem, ſanctificans ſimul Seniores, exemplum ipſis quoque fiens — a quinquageſimo anno declinat jam in ætatem ſeniorem: quam habens Dominus noſter docebat. Sicut Evangelium & omnes Seniores teſtantur, qui in Aſia apud Joannem diſcipulum Domini convenerunt, id ipſum tradidiſſe eis Joannem. Permanſit autem cum eis uſque ad Trajani tempora. Quidam autem eorum non ſolum Joannem, ſed & alios Apoſtolos viderunt, & hæc eadem de ipſis audierunt: & teſtantur de hujuſmodi relatione. Iren. l. ii, c. 39. Edit. Oxon.

" *Irenæus*, how all the Elders of *Aſia* teſtify with " one voice, that they had received from St. " *John* and the other Apoſtles, a tradition, con- " cerning a fact manifeſtly falſe! behold an " *Apoſtolic* man, profeſſing to prove from St. " *John's Goſpel*, things not only contradictory to " that Goſpel, but to the Articles of our " Creed [1]! *&c.*" The learned *Cave* alſo, in " his Life of *Irenæus*, tells us, " that he was be- " trayed into this error,—partly from a miſ- " taken report, which he had ſomewhere picked " up (and it may be from his maſter *Papias)* and " partly out of oppoſition to his adverſaries, " who maintained, that our Saviour ſtaid no " longer upon earth, than till the thirty-firſt " year of his age; againſt whom the eagerneſs " of diſputation tempted him to make good his " aſſertion from any plauſible pretence [2]." &c.

He aſſerts likewiſe the doctrine of the *Millennium*, in the groſſeſt ſenſe of it, from the ſame authority of a tradition, handed down to him by all the old men, who had converſed with St. *John*, and heard him relate, *what our Saviour himſelf uſed to teach concerning it:* of which he has recorded the following paſſage; " The days " will come, in which there ſhall grow vine- " yards, having each 10,000 vine ſtocks; and " each ſtock, 10,000 branches; each branch, " 10,000 ſhoots; each ſhoot, 10,000 bunches; " each bunch, 10,000 grapes; and each grape

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[1] Vid. Whitby Strict. Patr. in Joh. c. viii, lvii. p. 200.

[2] Life of Iren. § 10. p. 170.

" ſqueezed ſhall yield 25 meaſures of wine; " and when any of the Saints ſhall go to " pluck a bunch, another bunch will cry out, I " am a better, take me, and bleſs the Lord " through me. In like manner a grain of wheat " ſown ſhall bear 10,000 ſtalks; each ſtalk " 10,000 grains; and each grain 10,000 pounds " of the fineſt flower; and ſo all other fruits, " ſeeds, and herbs in the ſame proportion, *&c.* " Theſe words, ſays he, *Papias*, a diſciple of St. " *John*, and companion of *Polycarp*, an ancient " man, teſtifies in writing in his fourth book, " and adds, that they are credible to thoſe who " believe[1]." The pious and cautious Dr. *Grabe* remarks on this occaſion, " that what " *Irenæus* ſays here about the ſtalks of grain, " will be thought an argument of ſtraw by " thoſe, to whom ſuch things appear incredible: " but, that we ought not however, either to " deny or affirm any thing raſhly [2]." But " *Euſebius* gives a frank and clear ſolution of the matter, by informing us, that *Papias was a weak man, of a very ſhallow underſtanding, as it appeared from his writings, and by miſtaking the meaning of the Apoſtles, impoſed theſe ſilly traditions on* Irenæus, *and the greateſt part of the Eccleſiaſtical writers, who reflecting on the age of the man, and his near approach to the Apoſtles, were drawn by him into the ſame opinions* [1].

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[1] Ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας, Ἰωάννου μὲν ἀκουστής, Πολυκάρπου δὲ ἑταῖρος γεγονώς, ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ.—Et adjecit, dicens, Hæc autem credibilia ſunt credentibus, l. v. p. 455.

Irenæus then procedes to confirm this doctrine, by the teſtimonies of the Prophets, *Iſaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Revelations of St. John:* and contends, that it cannot be interpreted Allegorically, but will be fulfilled according to the letter in an earthly Jeruſalem.

[2] Hoc quod *Irenæus* pro ubertate & magnitudine fructuum ex *paleis* nectit argumentum, *Stramineum* fortaſſe vocaverint, quibus iſta ſunt incredibilia. Sed de hiſce nihil temere negandum, uti nec affirmandum. Annot. ad loc. p. 455.

Irenæus affirms alſo, on the ſame authority of tradition delivered to him by thoſe, who had received it from the Apoſtles, *that* Enoch *and* Elias *were tranſlated into that very Paradiſe, from which* Adam *was expelled*, to remain there, till the conſummation of all things: and that it was the ſame place, into which St. *Paul* alſo was caught up [2]. This is affirmed likewiſe by all the later Fathers, both *Greek* and *Latin*; induced to it, we may imagine, by the pretence of an Apoſtolical tradition: which yet from the abſurdity of it, muſt neceſſarily be as falſe, as the reſt abovementioned. *Feverdantius*, the learned Editor of *Irenæus*, remarks upon this place; that though *St.* Auſtin *does not allow this opinion to be a point of faith, yet ſince* Irenæus *and all the Primitive Fathers declare it to have been the doctrine of the Apoſtles, he cannot think it ſafe to believe otherwiſe* [1]. And we muſt needs own him to be in the right, if, according to the principles of the Church of *Rome*, we can think the poſitive teſtimony of *Irenæus*, or the concurrent authority of all the Fathers, of weight enough to bear down the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind.

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[1] Σφόδρα γάρ τοι σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ λόγων τεκμηράμενον εἰπεῖν φαίνεται. πλὴν καὶ τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν πλείστοις, ὅσοις τῶν Ἐκκλησιαστικῶν, τῆς ὁμοίας αὐτῷ δόξης, παραίτιος γέγονε, τὴν ἀρχαιότητα τ' ἀνδρὸς προβεβλημένοις. ὥσπερ οὖν Εἰρηναίῳ, καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος τὰ ὅμοια φρονῶν ἀναπέφηνεν. Euſ. Hiſt. l. iii. 39.

N. B. *Euſebius* indeed, in another place, ſpeaks of *Papias* in a very different ſtrain, as of a perſon *ſingularly remarkable for his eloquence and knowledge of the Scriptures*. [l. iii. c. 36.] But this paſſage, as the learned *Valeſius* informs us, is not found in any of the old copies, which he had conſulted, nor in the ancient verſion of *Rufinus*. Whence he concludes, that it was inſerted by ſome ignorant Scholiaſt, as being contradictory to what *Euſebius* had more explicitly delivered elſewhere of the ſame *Papias*. Vid. Not. Valeſ. ad loc.

[2] Διὸ καὶ λέγουσιν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, τῶν Ἀποστόλων μαθηταί, τοὺς μετατεθέντας ἐκεῖσε μετατεθῆναι, etc. l. v. p. 405.

He aſſerts likewiſe very ſtrongly, the fabulous ſtory of the *Septuagint verſion*, with all the particulars already recited, of its miraculous birth, and the ſeparate cells, *&c.* To which he has added another, no leſs romantic; *that the ſacred Scriptures were utterly deſtroyed in the* Babyloniſh *captivity, but reſtored again, after ſeventy years, by* Eſdras, *inſpired by God for that purpoſe* [2]. And though in this alſo, he was followed by all the principal Fathers of the ſucceeding centuries, yet as Dr. *Prideaux*, and other learned men have remarked, there is no better foundation for it, than that *fabulous relation, in*

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[1] Vid. Ibid. Not. 5.

[2] Ὃς—ἐν τῇ—αἰχμαλωσίᾳ τοῦ λαοῦ διαφθαρεισῶν τῶν γραφῶν—ἐνέπνευσεν Ἔσδρᾳ τῷ ἱερεῖ, etc. l. iii. c. 25.

the fourteenth chapter of the ſecond apochryphal book of Eſdras: a book, too abſurd even *for the* Romaniſts *themſelves, to admit into their canon*[1]*:* and notwithſtanding the authority of *Irenæus*, and of all the other Fathers, who aſſert the ſame opinion, Mr. *Tillemont* declares *it to be very dangerous to religion, and tending, extremely to weaken the authority of the Scriptures* [2]. He intimates alſo more than once, his belief, *of Angels mixing with the daughters of men:* where his Editor takes notice, that all the early Fathers were drawn into the ſame error, by the authority of the *Apocryphal book of* Enoch, cited by St. *Jude* [3]. Yet as monſtrous as this error was, it maintained its ground, as Dr. *Whitby* aſſures us, through the four firſt centuries; though St. *Chryſoſtom* treats it, as *abſurd and blaſphemous, and*

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[1] Prid. Connect. par. i. p. 260. Vid. Ant. Van Dale Diſſert. de Ariſtea, p. 151.

[2] Mais l'autorité de ces Peres ne l'empêche pas d'alleguer diverſes raiſons contre une opinion, qu'on peut dire tres dangereuſe à la religion, puiſqu'elle affoiblit extremement l'autorité de l'Ecriture. Memoir. Eccleſ. Tom. iii. p. 93.

[3] Cum Angeli tranſgreſſores commixti fuiſſent eis. l. iv. c. lxx. p. 371. Not. ii and l. v. c. xxix.

Neque *Judas Apoſtolus*, ad cujus teſtimonium *Tertullianus* provocat, libros *Enochi* canonicos fecit, dum quandam ex iis prophetiam de adventu Domini ad judicium allegavit, etc. Grab. Spicil. Patr. vol. i. in Not. p. 344.

Hæc forte reſpexit S. Judas verſ. 6. ſcribens, Αγγέλους ἀπολιπόντας τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον etc.—Similiter ante ipſum S. *Petrus* in poſteriori epiſtola, c ii. ℣ 4. cujus obſcura quodammodo verba ex his Enochi verbis bene explicantur. Ibid. p. 351.

all, who eſpouſed it, as mad; and *Theodoret* calls them *infatuated and very ſtupid* [1].

From ſome of the doctrines abovementioned, and particularly that of the *Millennium*, Mr. *Chillingworth* has proved againſt the *Romaniſts*, *that the Catholic Church, even in the earlieſt ages, and within thirty or forty years after the Apoſtles, was not infallible in matters of faith:* ſince all thoſe abſurdities were taught by the Fathers of thoſe ages, not as their private opinions onely, but as doctrines of the Univerſal Church, derived immediately from the Apoſtles, and held ſo neceſſary, that thoſe, who held the contrary, were hardly conſidered, as real Chriſtians: to which he adds the following remark; that if *Papias*, who firſt committed them to writing, *could either by his own error, or a deſire to deceive, cozen the Fathers of the pureſt age in this, why not alſo in other things? Why not in twenty, as well as one? And why might not twenty others do it as well as he* [2]*?*

As to *Irenæus's* manner of expounding the Scriptures, it is much the ſame with that of *Juſtin*, or rather, according to Dr. *Grabe*, with that of the age, in which he lived: following no rule of criticiſm; nor giving any attention to the proper ſignification of words; but indulging a wild and enthuſiaſtic fancy, in the invention of typical ſenſes, and forced alluſions, utterly trifling and contemptible: *which thoſe, who read the Fathers, muſt always bear in mind*, as a learned Critic obſerves, *or they will be drawn into great and frequent errors* [1].

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[1] Obtinuit hæc ſententia apud patres fere omnes, qui quatuor primævis ſeculis floruerunt, etc. Vid. Whitby Strictur. Patrum. in Gen. c. vi. 4. p. 5.

[2] See his Additional Diſcourſes, p. 36, 37. at the end of his Works, in Edit. 7th.

Treating of the diſtinction of Animals into clean and unclean, he ſays; " The law foretold " theſe things figuratively; by animals denot- " ing men. Thoſe, who divide the hoof and " chew the cud, it pronounces clean: thoſe, " who do neither, unclean. Who then are " clean? Thoſe, who believe in the Father and " the Son. This is their Firmneſs or double " hoof: and to meditate day and night on the " laws of God, ſo as to be adorned with good " works, is to chew the cud. But the unclean " neither divide the hoof nor chew the cud: " that is, neither have faith in God, nor me- " ditate on his laws. This is the abomination " of the Gentiles. But ſuch as chew the cud, " and do not divide the hoof, are unclean: this " is a figurative deſcription of the *Jews* [2]."

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[1] Quorum nec ſtylus magnopere eſt elaboratus, nec ratiocinationes ad rectæ rationis & veræ criticæ normam exactæ, nec notiones ſatis perſpicuæ, aut per omnia inter ſeſe conſentientes, nec principia uſquequaque vera. Quod iis, qui Scriptores Eccleſiaſticos legunt, perpetuo animo obverſari oportet, ni in frequentes & graves errores incidere velint. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 775.

[2] Prædixit hæc omnia figuraliter lex, de animalibus delineans hominem.—Qui ſunt ergo mundi? qui in Patrem & Filium per Fidem

With much more to the ſame purpoſe. In which method of reaſoning, as he followed *Barnabas*, and the Apoſtolic Fathers, ſo he was followed himſelf by the later writers; and eſpecially by *Clemens of Alexandria*, who has copied this very paſſage [1].

Again, endeavouring to prove that the *Moſaic law* was to fill up the middle age of the world, between the natural law, and the law of Chriſt, he ſays; "This was typically ſhewn by many "things, but eſpecially by *Thamar*, daughter-"in-law to *Judas*. For when ſhe was bring-"ing out twins, one of them put out his hand "the firſt; and as the midwife ſuppoſed him to "be the firſt-born, ſhe tied a ſcarlet ſtring about "his hand. But when this was done, he drew "in his hand again, and his brother *Phares* "came out firſt; and after him *Zara*, who had "the mark. The Scripture clearly manifeſt-"ing by it the people, who had the ſcarlet ſign; "that is, the faith profeſſed by thoſe of the fore-"ſkin, or the uncircumciſed: which was firſt "ſhewn out in the Patriarchs, and then with-"drawn, that its brother might be brought out "firſt; and then he be born afterwards, who "had been ſhewn before, and was known by

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iter firmiter faciunt: hæc eſt enim firmitas eorum, qui duplicis ſunt ungulæ, etc. l. v. c. viii.

[1] Καθαρὰ ϗ δεκτὰ τῷ Θεῷ παραδίδωσιν ἡ γραφὴ. ὡς ἂν εἰς πατέρα ϗ εἰς υἱὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῶν δικαίων τὴν πορείαν ποιουμένων, αὕτη γὰρ ἡ τῶν διχηλούντων ἑδραιότης. Strom. l. vii. xviii. p. 900. Ed. Oxon.

“ the ſcarlet ſign: which is the paſſion of the “ Juſt one: præfigured from the beginning in “ *Abel*, deſcribed by the Prophets, but perfected “ in the laſt days by the Son of God [1].”

His reaſoning alſo upon the number of the Goſpels is in the ſame ſtrain: “ It is impoſſi- “ ble, ſays he, that there could have been more “ or leſs than four. For there are four climates, “ and four cardinals winds; and the Church is “ ſpread over the whole earth; but the Goſpel “ is the pillar and foundation of the Church, “ and its breath of life. The Church, there- “ fore, was to have four pillars, blowing im- “ mortality from every quarter, and giving life “ to men [2]. &c.”

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[1] Hoc & per alia quidem multa, jam vero & per Thamar Judæ nurum typice oſtenditur, etc. l. iv. c. 42.

[2] Neque autem plura numero quam hæc ſunt, neque rurſus pauciora capit eſſe Evangelia. Ἐπειδὴ—τέσσαρα κλίματα τοῦ κόσμου, ἐν ᾧ ἔσμεν, εἰσὶ, ϗ τέσσαρα καθόλικὰ πνεύματα, etc. l. iii. p. 220, 21.

N. B. This puts me in mind of a ſpecimen alſo of *Tertullian*’s judgment and way of reaſoning, on the quæſtion; *why the number of the Apoſtles was twelve*, and no other. I can account for this, ſays he, not onely by the voices of the Prophets, but by arguments drawn from things: for I find this number prefigured to us by the Creator. There were twelve wells in *Elim*; twelve gemms in the veſt of *Aaron*; twelve ſtones choſen by *Joſhua* out of the river *Jordan*, and depoſited in the Ark of the covenant: by all which the twelve Apoſtles were ſignified; who, like fountains, were to water the dry deſert of the Gentile world; like gemms, to illuminate the ſacred Veſtment of the Church which Chriſt the High Prieſt put on: and like ſtones, were firm in the faith. Cont. Marcion. l. iv. p. 5 9 D.

I have been the fuller in opening the characters and opinions of *Juſtin* and *Irenæus*, that I might ſave myſelf the trouble of inlarging in the ſame manner on the reſt: eſpecially as their characters will be ſufficiently illuſtrated, by the ſpecimens of them occaſionally interſperſed, in the ſequel of this argument. But the later Fathers, generally ſpeaking, do but copy the notions, and even the blunders of theſe two. For as they are the earlieſt, who have left any conſiderable works behind them, ſo they are the firſt likewiſe in credit and authority with ſucceding ages, on the account of their piety, learning, and abilities: and the caſe was the ſame with the antients, as it is ſtill with the moderns; that when any facts or doctrines have once been eſtabliſhed by men of eminent character, they are uſually taken upon truſt by all who follow, till ſome new inquirer ariſes, who, not content with opinions impoſed on him by chance or education, reſolves to judge for himſelf, and to uſe his natural right and liberty of ſearching into the real grounds of them.

For inſtance; St. *Clemens of Rome* having alledged the ridiculous ſtory of the *Phœnix*, *as a type and proof of the reſurrection*; all the later Fathers take it from him of courſe, and refer us to the ſame bird, not onely as really exiſting, *but as created on purpoſe by God, to refute the incredulity of the Gentiles*, on the ſubject of this great article of our faith. Yet all the heathen writers, from whom they borrowed the ſtory, from *Herodotus*, down to their own times, treat it as nothing elſe but a mere fable [1]. The caſe is the ſame with all the other facts, and abſurd doctrines above ſpecified; of the *Millennium*; *of Angels debauching women, and begetting Dæmons*; *of the divinity of the Septuagint verſion*; *of the deſtruction of the ſacred Scriptures in the* Babyloniſh *captivity*, &c. In all which, theſe two Fathers, whoſe principles I have been illuſtrating, were implicitely followed, for a century or two at leaſt, by all their ſucceſſors. *Irenæus*, indeed, ſtands ſingle in his account of *the old age of Chriſt*; though confidently affirmed by him, on the pretended authority of all the Apoſtles; becauſe it was evidently inconſiſtent with the hiſtory of the Goſpels. But the later Fathers generally ran into a contrary extreme, and affirmed, what was maintained by the *Heretics onely of* Irenæus's *days*, *that our Lord preached but one complete year*, *and died at the age of thirty:* which, according to *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, was both foretold by the Prophets, and affirmed by the Evangeliſts [2]. Whereas from the hiſtory of the Goſpels, it is evident, that his miniſtry continued through *ſeveral ſucceſſive Paſſovers*, or, as Sir *Iſaac Newton* has with great probability computed, through five; and that he died in his *thirty-fourth year* [1].

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[1] Ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, etc. Herodot. l. ii. § 73. Vid. it. Whitby Strictur. Patr. in Pſalm xcii. 12. p. 85. it. Bochart. Hierozoic. Par. poſter. l. vi. c. v. p. 817.

[2] Καὶ ὅτι ἐνιαυτὸν μόνον δεῖ αὐτὸν κηρύξαι, καὶ τοῦτο γέγραπται οὕτως. ἐνιαυτὸν δεκτὸν κυρίου κηρύξαι ἀπέστειλέ με. τοῦτο καὶ ὁ προφήτης εἶπεν, καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον. Strom. i. p. 407. Vid. Not. in loc. Edit. Oxon. Quinto decimo anno imperii [Tiberii] paſſus eſt Chriſtus, annos habens triginta cum pateretur. Tertull. adv. Jud. p. 215.

Now from what I have above collected, it is certain, that if a groſs abſurdity of opinions, and the belief of things impoſſible, be the proof of a weak mind; if expoſitions of the Scriptures, void of reaſon and common ſenſe, betray a great want of judgement, then we may juſtly charge thoſe defects upon theſe ancient fathers; from whoſe fooliſh reaſonings, both in religion and morality, whole books have been compiled [2].

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[1] Thus have we, in the Goſpels of *Matthew* and *John*, all things told in due order, from the beginning of *John's* preaching to the Death of Chriſt; and the years diſtinguiſhed by ſuch eſſential characters, that they cannot be miſtaken. Obſervat. on the Proph. of Dan. c. xi. p. 159.

[2] Vid. Dan. Whitby, Stricturæ Patrum—Traité de la Morale des Peres. Par Jean Barbeyrac—Dallæus, etc.

N. B. I ſhall here take the liberty to tranſcribe the following note, from a very ingenious and candid Advocate of Chriſtianity, the Rev. *Archdeacon of Carliſle*, as it exhibits a juſt idea of the characters and writings of the earlieſt Fathers.

" Chriſtianity was in its infancy, at moſt in its childhood, when theſe men wrote, and therefore it is no wonder, that they *ſpake as children*, that they *underſtood as children*, that they *thought as children*. This was according to the œconomy they were then under. And beſides, they had not time and leiſure to ſearch into the Chriſtian doctrines, nor had they laid in a ſufficient ſtock and fund for that purpoſe, they being but newly adopted into the Chriſtian Church: yet they were willing to appear in its behalf, and to defend it as

Mr. *Dodwell*, one of their moſt zealous admirers, does not pretend to defend them on this head; but frankly owns, that their way of reaſoning is *looſe, ſophiſtical, and declamatory*; *far ſhort of the ſolidity of the moderns*; *who excel them not onely in philoſophy and learning, but in the knowledge of antiquity, and even of their own languages:* and all that he pleads for in favour of their interpretations, eſpecially of the New Teſtament, is, *that they ſhould not be wholly ſlighted, though they have but little ſenſe in them, becauſe they were agreeable to the cuſtom or taſte of thoſe ages* [1].

“ well as they could, which was accepted by Heaven.” [Edwards's Patrologia, p. 57.] “ Let me not be cenſured, though I ſhould be ſo bold as to ſay, that we ſhould have underſtood the Scriptures much better, if we had not had the writings of the Fathers; for they have obſcured and depraved them by their different and contrary comments: They have raiſed controverſies, taught men to quarrel and diſpute about the ſenſe of ſeveral texts, which otherwiſe are plain and obvious; and about ſeveral matters of practice, which are evident enough in themſelves, ſome of which are ſuperſtitious,” &c. Ib. p. 135. See Conſiderations on the State of the world with regard to Religion, &c. p. 174.

[1] Quin bonas litteras ſtudioſius excultas a nuperis noſtris Eccleſiæ Reformatoribus libenter agnoſcimus. Nec in philoſophia modo, ſed in antiquitate, in ipſis etiam linguis eorum temporum vernaculis. Sed & preſſiorem noſtris & ſolidiorem argumentandi methodum agnoſcimus, quam ſit alia illa laxior & ſophiſtica & declamatoria, quæ non apud Patres duntaxat; ſed & alios eorundem temporum Scriptores erat receptiſſima — Dodwell, Præfat. ad Diſſertat. in Iren. § 12.

Sic illis nimirum deferendum eſſe in Scripturarum in-

As to the quæſtion of their veracity, it may admit perhaps ſome debate, and it will probably be thought harſh in the opinion of many, to ſuſpect men of ſuch piety and ſanctity of life, either of the invention, or the propagation of known forgeries. Yet there are many things ſo peremptorily affirmed, without any ground of truth or probability, by the two Fathers, whoſe characters I have been conſidering, as to give us too much cauſe for ſuch a ſuſpicion: which, as we have ſeen above, has been actually charged on *Juſtin*, by men of learning, and may, with equal reaſon, be charged alſo on *Irenæus*. For what other account can be given of his frequent appeals to the tradition and teſtimony of the Apoſtles, for the ſupport of ſo many abſurd and incredible doctrines? If the doctrines themſelves be falſe; the pretended tradition of them could not poſſibly be true: and if we abſolve *Irenæus* from the forgery; it muſt be charged on ſomebody elſe, more antient ſtill, and of authority enough, to impoſe it upon him; and on whomſoever it may fall, it gives but a lamentable idea of thoſe primitive ages, and primitive champions of the Chriſtian cauſe.

Papias, who is ſuppoſed to have been the diſciple of St. *John*, and Biſhop of *Hierapolis*, is ſaid to have given riſe to moſt of the fabulous traditions, which obtained in thoſe early days.

terpretatione cenſemus, ut ne quidem ratiocinia alioqui minus ſolida, quæ tamen fuerint in more ſeculi, plane negligenda ſint. Ibid. § 16.

Dr. *Whitby* joins *Irenæus* to him, and ſays, “ it “ is very remarkable, that theſe two earlieſt “ writers of the ſecond century, who, on the “ credit of idle reports and uncertain fame, “ have delivered to us things ſaid to be done by “ the Apoſtles, and their ſcholars, have ſhame“ fully impoſed upon us, by the forgery of fa“ bles and falſe ſtories [1].” But whoever forged the reſt of the ſpurious traditions above recited, yet that, which relates to *the old age of* Jeſus, the moſt ſolemnly atteſted of them all, and peculiar to *Irenæus*, may be fairly preſumed to be his own forgery, becauſe it was never embraced by any body elſe, and was ſingularly adapted to the argument, which he was then aſſerting, in oppoſition to certain Heretics, called *Valentinians*, who allowed *but one entire year* to our Saviour's miniſtry [2].

But be that as it will; ſince the very earlieſt of all traditions, and the neareſt to the fountain's head, are found to be ſo corrupt; it will demonſtrate at leaſt, what a treacherous foundation they muſt be, to build any opinion upon, and much more, any article of our faith; which might be exemplified by many other inſtances from the hiſtory of the firſt centuries. For as ſoon as religious diſputes began to infeſt the Church, the plea of Apoſtolical tradition was preſently employed, as the moſt effectual to ſilence an adverſary; and was taken up therefore and urged with equal confidence by all ſides. And it is an argument indeed, which of all others ſeems the beſt calculated for the uſe of controverſy: for wherever it meets with credit, it muſt neceſſarily have great weight; and where it happens even to find none, yet it cannot eaſily be confuted; as not being reducible to any clear teſt, or fixed rule, by which it may be tried. It is not therefore ſtrange, to find its authority carried ſo high, and in ſome caſes, magnified even above the Scriptures themſelves, by all the dealers in controverſy, from the earlieſt Fathers down to Dr. *Waterland.*

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[1] Id denique imprimis obſervandum eſt, duos primos Scriptores ſecundi ſeculi, qui ex rumuſculis famaque dubia res geſtas a Domini Apoſtolis, eorumque diſcipulis nobis tradiderunt,— fabulis fingendis, falſiſque narrationibus, nobis turpiter illuſiſſe. Præf. ad Strictur. Patr. p. lxxiii.

[2] Ἐνιαυτῷ γὰρ ἑνὶ βούλονται αὐτὸν μετὰ τὸ βάπτισμα αὐτοῦ κεκηρυχέναι. Iren. l. i. c. i. p. 16.

For example; in that moſt antient and celebrated diſpute between the eaſtern and weſtern Churches, *about the time of holding their Eaſter*, St. *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*, the Diſciple and immediate Succeſſor of the Apoſtles, and *Anicetus* his contemporary, the Biſhop of *Rome*, ſeverally alledged the authority of *Apoſtolic tradition* for their different practice, from which neither of them could be induced to depart [1]. But *Papias*, as it is hinted above, the diſciple of

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[1] Οὔτε γὰρ ὁ Ἀνίκητος τὸν Πολύκαρπον πεῖσαι ἐδύνατο μὴ τηρεῖν ἅτε μετὰ Ἰωάννου τοῦ μαθητοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν Ἀποστόλων, οἷς συνδιέτριψεν, ἀεὶ τετηρηκότα, etc. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. v. c. 24.

Polycarp, was the chief promotor and aſſertor of it: "as oft, ſays he, as I met with any one, "who had converſed with the antients, I always "inquired very diligently after their ſayings and "doctrines; what *Andrew*, *Peter*, *Philip*, *John*, "—and the reſt of our Lord's Apoſtles uſed "to teach. For I was perſuaded, that I could "not profit ſo much by books, as by the voice "of living witneſſes [1]." *Irenæus*, the ſcholar of *Papias*, who had learnt the uſe of it from his maſter, was likewiſe a zealous aſſertor of it. "If "a diſpute, ſays he, ſhould ariſe, about any "matter, though but of little moment, ought "we not to have recourſe to the moſt antient "Churches, in which the Apoſtles reſided, and "take from them what is certain and clear about "the point in quæſtion [2]? *Tertullian* declares it to be the onely weapon, that can knock down an Hæretic: and in all ſuch controverſies, advances its authority above the Scriptures; nay, forbids any appeal to the Scriptures, as hurtful to the cauſe of truth. *We muſt not appeal to the Scriptures,* ſays he, *or truſt the merits of the cauſe with them: in which there can either be no victory, or an uncertain one, or what is equivalent to uncertain* [1]. And in this, Dr. *Waterland* declares, *that he ſeems to have judged well, upon the prudential caſe, and like a wiſe and ſagacious man, with regard to the circumſtances of thoſe times* [2]. And in another place the ſame learned Doctor obſerves, from the authority of *Irenæus*, that *Polycarp had converted great numbers to the Faith by the ſtrength of tradition*; *being a ſenſible argument, and more affecting,* he ſays, *at that time, than any diſpute from the bare letter of the Scripture could be* [3].

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[1] Εἰ δέ που καὶ παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους. τί Ἀνδρέας, ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν, ἢ τί Φίλιππος, ἢ τί Θωμᾶς, ἢ Ἰάκωβος, ἢ τί Ἰωάννης, ἢ Ματθαῖος, ἢ τίς ἕτερος τῶν τοῦ Κυρίου μαθητῶν, etc. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. iii. c. xxxix. p. 136.

[2] Refert *Irenæus*, vir Apoſtolicorum temporum, & Papiæ, auditoris Evangeliſtæ Joannis, diſcipulus. Hieron. Ep. liii. ad Theodoram. Op. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 581. Edit. Benedict.

Et ſi aliquibus de aliqua modica quæſtione diſceptatio eſſet, nonne oporteret in antiquiſſimas recurrere Eccleſias, in quibus Apoſtoli converſati ſunt, & ab eis de præſenti quæſtione ſumere quod certum & re liquidum eſt? l. iii. c. iv. p. 205.

Here then we ſee in ſhort, the origin and hiſtory of tradition. *Papias, a weak and ſilly man,* who miſtook the ſenſe of the Apoſtles, was the firſt, who made it his particular buſineſs to recommend the uſe of it, and for that purpoſe took the pains to collect all the unwritten facts and ſayings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, from the report of thoſe, who had converſed with them. Theſe ſayings, as *Euſebius* tells us, conſiſted of a number of *ſtrange parables, and doctrines of our Saviour, with ſeveral other fabu-*

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[1] Ergo non ad Scripturas provocandum eſt: nec in his conſtituendum certamen; in quibus aut nulla aut incerta victoria eſt, aut par incertæ. De præſcript. Hæreticor. 19.

[2] Wherein to me he ſeems to have judged very well upon the prudential caſe, and like a wiſe and ſagacious man. Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 378.

[3] Ibid. p. 380. Not. y.

lous ſtories; which the authority of ſo venerable a perſon, who had lived with the Apoſtles, impoſed upon the Church for genuine [1]: and

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[1] Καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς συγγραφεὺς, ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου, εἰς αὐτὸν ἥκοντα παρατέθειται, ξένας τέ τινας παραβολὰς τοῦ Σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καί τινα ἄλλα μυθικώτερα. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 39.

N. B. Nothing more effectually demonſtrates the uncertainty of all tradition, than what is delivered to us by Antiquity, concerning this very *Papias*. *Irenæus* declares him, to have been *the companion of Polycarp, and the Diſciple of St. John* the Apoſtle. [l. v. c. 33.] But *Euſebius* tells us, that he was not a diſciple of *John the Apoſtle*, but of *John*, called the *Elder* or *Preſbyter*, who was a companion onely of the Apoſtles: and whom *Irenæus* by miſtake imagined to be the Apoſtle. [Hiſt. l. iii. 38.] Now *Irenæus* might probably be born while St. *John* was ſtill living, and had converſed very familiarly in his youth with *Polycarp*, the diſciple of that Apoſtle, and declares, *that he retained the memory of all things which he had learnt from him, more diſtinctly, than of things, which had happened to him much later.* [Euſeb. v. 20.] He was well acquainted alſo with *Papias*, whom he calls an ancient man: which makes it ſeem probable, both that *Papias* was contemporary with the Apoſtle *John*, and that *Irenæus* could not be miſtaken in his account of *Papias's* maſter, which he might have received from *Papias* himſelf: and for this reaſon, the generality of the modern writers prefer the authority of *Irenæus* to that of *Euſebius*, who lived two hundred years later. Yet after all, it is evident, from the expreſs words of *Papias*, as they are cited by *Euſebius*, that *Papias* had never perſonally heard or known any of the Apoſtles, but received his reports of them onely from thoſe, who had: and that *Irenæus* therefore was deceived by the identity of the name, and had never heard perhaps of that other *John*, called the *Preſbyter*; who is ſuppoſed by ſome of the principal Fathers, to have written *the ſecond and third Epiſtles*, as well the gravity of his ſcholar *Irenæus* confirmed and propagated to ſucceeding ages: through which, every one ſtill added to the collection, whatever he thought uſeful to the particular cauſe or opinion, that he favored. This account of the matter, deduced from the teſtimony of antiquity itſelf, confutes at once all the extravagant encomiums, which our leading Divines ſo laviſhly beſtow on thoſe primitive Fathers, and their traditions. For if the earlieſt and beſt vouched traditions of all, which are tranſmitted to us, be true, or at all to be regarded, it follows of courſe, that we ought to receive the abſurd doctrines abovementioned, as articles of faith; *the fable of the Millennium*; *of Angels begetting Dæmons on the bodies of women*; *of the old age of Chriſt*, *of* Ænoch *tranſlated into* Adam's *paradiſe*; with many more of the ſame ſtamp; which were all embraced by the earlieſt Fathers, and delivered to us, on the authority of the Apoſtles, by ſome of their immediate Succeſſors; and eſpecially by thoſe four, on whom Dr. *Waterland* lays the greateſt ſtreſs; *Juſtin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Irenæus*, and *Clemens* of *Alexandria*; " eminent perſonages, as he ſays,

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as *the book of Revelations*, now aſcribed to the Apoſtle. [Euſeb. Hiſt. iii. 38. Hieron. Catalog. Scriptor. de Joan. Apoſt. & Papia.] The learned Mr. *Dodwell* therefore declares it to *be certain, that John, the Maſter of Papias, was a different man from the Apoſtle*; and conſequently that *Irenæus himſelf, and Polycrates his contemporary, and Clemens Alexandrinus alſo, who was but a little younger, were all miſtaken, with regard to this fact*. Diſſert. in Iren. i. § iv.

"who floriſhed within fifty, ſixty, or at moſt "ninety years from the Apoſtolic age. Whoſe "nearneſs to the time; known fidelity; admi"rable indowments ordinary and extraordinary, "add great weight to their teſtimony or doc"trine, and make it a probable rule of inter"pretation in the prime things [1]." To which he ſubjoins, in a marginal note, "that *Clemens*, "tho' the lateſt of the four, yet teſtifies of himſelf, "that he had received his doctrine from ſeveral "diſciples of the very chief Apoſtles; who had "truly preſerved the tradition of the bleſſed "doctrine, as it came directly from the holy "Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*." Notwithſtanding all which, the Doctor could not but know, that this very *Clemens* holds as many abſurd, unſound, and exploded doctrines, and deals as largely in the fabulous and apocryphal books of the primitive Chriſtians, as any other Father whatſoever. Theſe facts ſhew likewiſe the weakneſs of that argument, which the Doctor alledges for the truth of doctrines, from *the unanimity*, with which they are aſſerted by the antient writers. "This is the argument, ſays "he, which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* inſiſt much "upon and triumph in, over the Hæretics of "their days —— for it is highly unreaſonable to "ſuppoſe, that Churches diſtant in place, and "of different languages, and under no common "viſible head, ſhould all unite in the ſame er"rors —— Again, ſuch unanimity could never

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[1] Import of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 369.

"come by chance, but muſt be derived from "one common ſource: and therefore the harmony of their doctrine was in itſelf a pregnant "argument of the truth of it [1]." But if the unanimity of the primitive Fathers muſt be allowed to have ſo great a force, as to evince the truth of any opinion, it would neceſſarily eſtabliſh all thoſe monſtrous doctrines above ſpecified; ſince it would be difficult to produce any other whatſoever, in which there was ſo great an harmony among them, or ſo general a conſent of the whole Church, through the three firſt centuries, and that intirely grounded upon the pretence of Apoſtolic tradition.

But I cannot diſmiſs this article of the doctrines and opinions of theſe antient Fathers, without taking notice of one, which was univerſally received and believed through all ages of the primitive Church, *viz.* "that there were a number "of Magicians, Necromancers or Conjurers, "both among the Gentiles and the Hæretical "Chriſtians, who had each their particular Dæmons or evil Spirits, for their aſſociates, perpetually attending on their perſons, and obſequious to their commands; by whoſe help "they could perform miracles, foretell future "events, call up the Souls of the dead, exhibit "them to open view, and infuſe into People "whatever dreams or viſions they thought fit." — All which is conſtantly affirmed by the Primitive Writers and Apologiſts, and commonly applied by them to prove the immortality of the Soul.

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[1] Ibid. p. 372, 3.

"Let the powers of Necromancy, ſays *Juſtin* "*Martyr*, and the evocations of human Souls, "and of boys eſpecially who had ſuffered violent deaths, and of thoſe Spirits, whom the "Magicians call the Inſpirers of dreams and aſſeſſors, and the works, which are performed "by the ſkilful in theſe arts, convince you, that "the ſouls of men exiſt ſtill after death [1]."

Lactantius, ſpeaking of certain philoſophers, who held, *that the ſoul periſhed with the body*, ſays, "they durſt not have declared ſuch an "opinion, in the preſence of any Magician, "or if they had done it, he would have confuted them upon the ſpot, by ſenſible experiments; by calling up ſouls from the dead, "and rendring them viſible to human eyes, and "making them ſpeak and foretell future events "[2]."

The Author of the book, called, the *Recog*"*nition of St. Clemens*, one of the moſt antient and moſt learned of thoſe many ſpurious pieces, which were forged by the firſt Chriſtians, affirms, "that *Simon Magus* confeſſed to one of "his companions, that he wrought all his "amazing works, by the help of the Soul of

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[1] Apol. i. p. 27. Edit. Thirlb.

[2] Qui profecto non auderent de interitu animarum, Mago aliquo præſente, diſſerere, qui ſciret certis carminibus ciere ab Inferis animas, &c. Divin. Inſtitut. l. vii c. 13.

" an healthy young boy, who had been violent-" ly put to death for that purpoſe, and then " called up from the dead, by ineffable adjura-" tions, and compelled to be his aſſiſtant [1]."

Irenæus, giving an acccount of the diſciples of the ſame *Simon*, tell us, " that they lived " lewdly, exerciſing magical arts, and uſing " exorciſms, incantations, and love-charms, " and induſtriouſly practiſing all other curious " arts, by the aſſiſtance of their familiar Spirits " and Inſpirers of dreams [2]." And ſpeaking " afterwards of the Hæretic *Carpocrates* and his " followers, he ſays, " Theſe likewiſe practiſe " magical arts, with incantations and love-" charms, and have their aſſiſtant Dæmons and " Inſpirers of dreams, with all the other male-" volent Spirits [3].

" The Magicians, ſays *Clemens of Alexandria*, " boaſt of Dæmons, as the Miniſters of their " impiety, reckoning them part of their family, " and forcing them by their incantations, to be " the ſlaves of their will [4]."

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[1] Pueri, inquit, incorrupti & violenter necati animam adjuramentis ineffabilibus evocatam adſiſtere mihi feci, & per ipſam fit omne quod jubeo. Lib. ii. c. xiii. Edit. Cotelerii.

[2] Igitur horum Myſtici Sacerdotes libidinoſe quidem quidem vivunt; Magias autem perficiunt — exorciſmis & incantationibus utuntur, &c. Adv. Hæreſ. l. i. c. xx.

[3] Artes etiam Magicas operantur & ipſi, & incantationes & philtra. Quoque & chariteſia, & paredros, & oneirepompos & reliquas malignationes, &c.—ib. c. xxix.

[4] Μάγοι δὲ ἤδη ἀσεβείας τῆς σφῶν αὐτῶν ὑπηρέτας δαίμονας αὐχοῦσιν. &c. Cohort. ad Gent. p. 52. Edit. Potter.

Tertullian declares of theſe Dæmons, “ that “ they had the power of inflicting horrible diſeaſes both on the minds and bodies of men, “ and even cruel deaths; yet they frequently “ contrived to cure the diſorders which they “ had wrought, in order to ſupport the credit “ of their divinity, and the honor of their Altars, and ſecure to themſelves their proper “ food and nouriſhment from the rich ſteams “ and blood of the victims, which were offered “ to them [1].” For this likewiſe, as monſtrous as it is, was the common opinion of all the Fathers, taken, as uſual, upon truſt, from the authority of *Juſtin Martyr*, who was probably the inventor of it, “ that the Dæmons, after “ they had given themſelves up to their luſts “ and lewd debaucheries with boys and women, “ began to want the rich fumes and the fat of “ ſacrifices, to ſtrengthen them for the enjoyment of their luſtfull pleaſures [2].”

Cyprian affirms, “ that they commonly lay “ lurking within the ſtatues and images of the “ Heathen Deities; inſpired the breaſts of the “ Soothſayers; animated the fibres of the en-

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[1] Itaque corporibus quidem & valétudines infligunt, & aliquos caſus acerbos; animæ vero repentinos, & extraordinarios per vim exceſſus.—Ut ſibi pabula propria nidoris & ſanguinis procuret —— Benefici plane & circa curas valetudinum. Lædunt enim primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt. Apologet. c. xxii. Pluribus notum eſt Dæmoniorum quoque opera & immaturas & atroces effici mortes. —De Anim. c. lvii.

[2] Ὧν ἐνδεεῖς γεγόνασι μετὰ τὸ ϖαθεσιν ἐπιθυμιῶν δουλωθῆναι, etc. Apol. p. 113 Edit. Thirlb.

" trails of victims; directed the flight of birds, " and the chances of lots; involving falſehood " always with truth, and themſelves ſometimes " deceived, as well as deceiving others; diſqui- " eted the lives of men; diſturbed their ſleep; " excited terrors in their minds, convulſions " in their bodies; deſtroyed health, and brought " on diſeaſes, ſo as to force people to worſhip " them; that being filled and fatted by the " ſteams of Altars and burnt ſacrifices, they " might ſeem to cure the maladies, which they " had inflicted; whereas all the cure, which " they performed, was by ceaſing onely to do " hurt [1]."

And as the whole ſyſtem of Pagan Idolatry was believed by the Fathers to have been managed by the craft and agency of Dæmons, ſo the whole art of Magic was ſuppoſed alſo to be carried on by the ſame powers, for the ſake of deluding and deſtroying mankind. In the caſe of Idolatry, they imagined them to aſſume the names, and to act the parts of the Heathen Gods, and in Magic to aſſume the forms of departed ſouls, and to appear under the names of thoſe, who were called up from the dead; and as ſuch, to foretell future events, and anſwer to all quæſtions, which ſhould be demanded of them. And the reaſon which they give, why the ſouls called up from the dead were chiefly of thoſe, who had been put to a violent death, is, becauſe ſuch ſpirits were generally thought to be the moſt malevolent and revengefull, and ready to perpetrate the ſame acts of violence on others, which they themſelves had injuriouſly ſuffered [1].

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[1] Hi ergo Spiritus ſub ſtatuis & imaginibus conſecratis deliteſcunt. Hi afflatu ſuo Vatum pectora inſpirant, &c. De idolor. van. p. 206.

Now the opinion, which I have here explaned, is not onely a proof of the groſſeſt credulity, but of that peculiar ſpecies of it, which, of all others, lays a man the moſt open to the deluſive arts of Impoſtors. For a mind, ſo totally poſſeſſed by ſuperſtitious fancies, and diſturbed by vain terrors, could not have either the judgement to diſcern, or the inclination to examine, or the courage even to ſuſpect, the pretenſions of thoſe vagrant Jugglers, who, in thoſe primitive ages, were ſo numerous, and ſo induſtriouſly employed in the affair of deluding their fellow creatures. Every man will perceive, how eaſy it muſt have been to men of that claſs, whether Heathens, Jews, or Chriſtians (for they are all allowed to have had ſuch Impoſtors among them) to impoſe the tricks of their art, as the effects of a ſupernatural power, on a multitude already perſuaded that they lived on magic ground, expoſed at every ſtep to ſnares and charms, contrived by malicious Spirits perpetually haunting them, and watching every unguarded moment, to get poſſeſſion both of their ſouls and bodies [1]. And when pious Chriſtians are arrived to this pitch of credulity, as to believe, that evil ſpirits or evil men can work real miracles, in defiance and oppoſition to the authority of the Goſpel, their very piety will oblige them to admit as miraculous whatever is pretended to be wrought in the defence of it, and ſo make them of courſe the implicit dupes of their own wonder-workers.

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[1] Itaque invocantur quidem aori & Biæothanati, ſub illo fidei argumento, quod credibile videatur, eas potiſſimum animas ad vim & injuriam facere, quàs per vim & injuriam ſævus & immaturus finis extorſit, quaſi ad vicem offenſæ. Tert. De anim. c. lvii. Cypr. ib. 206.

IV. I ſhall now procede, as I propoſed, to take a particular review of all the ſeveral gifts, or miraculous powers, which were actually clamed, and pretended to have been poſſeſſed by the primitive Church: which, according to the teſtimonies produced above, were, *the power of raiſing the dead*; *of healing the ſick*; *of caſting out Devils*; *of propheſying*; *of ſeeing viſions*; *of diſcovering the ſecrets of men*; *of expounding the ſcriptures*; *of ſpeaking with tongues.*

Sect. 1. As to the firſt, and the principal indeed of all miracles, that of raiſing the dead; it was frequently performed, as *Irenæus* affirms, *on neceſſary occaſions*; *and men ſo raiſed had lived afterwards among them many years*; but it is very ſtrange, that from the time of the Apoſtles, there is not an Inſtance of this miracle to be found in the three firſt centuries; except a ſingle caſe, ſlightly intimated by *Euſebius* from the books of *Papias*; which he ſeems to rank among the other fabulous ſtories delivered by that weak man [1].

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[1] Nam & ſuggeſſimus nullum pæne hominem carere Dæmonio. Tert. ib.

It is is certain, that if a miracle of ſo ſurprizing a nature had been ſo frequent, as *Irenæus* affirms it to have been; or performed, as it were, in every pariſh, or place where there was a Chriſtian Church, it muſt have made great noiſe in the world, and been celebrated, not onely by the primitive Fathers, but by all the Hiſtorians of thoſe times. But it was ſo far from being commonly or openly effected, as every miracle ſhould neceſſarily be, which is wrought for the converſion of Infidels, that all the enemies of the Goſpel, as *Irenæus* himſelf confeſſes, conſtantly affirmed *the thing itſelf to be impoſſible* [2]. A ſure proof, that they had never ſeen or known it to be done, unleſs in ſuch a manner, as carried with it a ſtrong ſuſpicion of fraud or colluſion. Mr. *Dodwell* however, from this ſingle authority of *Irenæus*, aſſerts the miraculous powers of the ſecond century to be ſuperior even to thoſe of the firſt, or Apoſtolic age. *They raiſed the dead*, ſays he, *in the Apoſtolic Churches*;

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[1] Νεκροῦ γὰρ ἀνάστασιν, κατ' αὐτὸν γεγονυῖαν ἱστορεῖ, καὶ αὖ πάλιν ἕτερον παράδοξον περὶ Ἰοῦστον, &c. Hiſt. Eccl. iii. 39.

[2] Tantum enim abſunt ab eo, ut mortuum ipſi excitent, ut ne quidem credant, hoc in totum poſſe fieri. Iren. l. ii. c. 56.

yet we have few examples of it in the genuin acts of the Apoſtles: but in Irenæus's *days, they raiſed not a few, but very often* [1]. And in the ſame ſtrain he runs through all the other miracles of the primitive times, and gives them the preference, in their number at leaſt, to thoſe of the Apoſtles; yet is forced to own, after all, that towards the end of the ſecond century, and while *Irenæus* himſelf might be ſtill living, this power of raiſing the dead was loſt and vaniſhed. For in the very ſame age, when one *Autolycus*, an eminent heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, a convert and champion of the Goſpel, *to ſhew him but one perſon, who had been raiſed from the dead*, on the condition of turning Chriſtian himſelf upon it; *Theophilus* diſcovers by his anſwer, that he was not able to give him that ſatisfaction [2]. Upon which Mr. *Dodwell* remarks, *that the great number of perſons, who had been raiſed ſome years before, when the fact was common, were dead again for the ſecond time in this interval*; which, for the ſake of his hypotheſis, he ſtretches, as well as he can, to *forty years* [3].

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[1] Excitabant mortuos in Eccleſiis Apoſtolicis, quos tamen raros legimus,—excitabant ſimiliter mortuos *fraternitates Irenæi*,—nec illos tamen adeo raros, ſed ſæpiſſime. Diſſert. ii. in Iræn. § XLII. p. 165.

[2] Φὴς γάρ, δεῖξόν μοι κἂν ἕνα ἐγερθέντα ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἵνα ἰδὼν πιστεύσω, &c. Theoph. ad Autol. l. i. p. 77. c. Ad finem Oper. Juſt. Mart. Pariſ. 1639. Defecere item *mortuorum excitationes*. Certe Autolyco roganti vel unum oſtenderet qui fuiſſet e mortuis revocatus, ita reſpondit *Theophilus*, quaſi vel unum demonſtrare minime potuerit. Diſſert. in Iren. ii. § XLIV. p. 171.

[3] Quo temporis interval-

But in truth, the fact itſelf, as delivered by *Ireneus*, ſeems to be utterly incredible on many accounts: 1ſt, That a caſe of ſo wonderful a nature, ſhould be common among them, yet not a ſingle inſtance of it particularly deſcribed, or clearly atteſted in all hiſtory. 2dly, That it ſhould be performed in every part of the world, where there was a Church or aſſembly of Chriſtians; yet all thoſe, who were not of the Church, and for whoſe ſake it was chiefly performed, ſhould be inſiſting all the while, *that the thing itſelf was impoſſible.* 3dly, That it ſhould be common in the days of *Irenæus*, yet *Theophilus*, who lived at the ſame time, ſhould not be able to alledge a ſingle inſtance of it, when challenged to it by his friend, whom he was laboring to convert, and who offered to be converted upon the proof of that fact. Laſtly, That a power, of all others the moſt affecting and reputable to the Church, ſhould be withdrawn at a time, when it's adverſaries were defying them to ſhew any effects of it, and putting the merits of the controverſy upon that very iſſue [1]. All which circumſtances laid together, muſt needs leave the ſtrongeſt ſuſpicion on the claim of the primitive

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lo rurſus obierint, qui ſub initium *Marci Aurelii* fuiſſent in vitam revocati. Ibid.

[1] This ſhews the vanity of that diſtinction, which ſome are apt to make, between the primitive and the Popiſh miracles; that the firſt were wrought for the ſake, and in the midſt, of unbelievers; the laſt among the faithfull onely. Contra, recentiorum pleraque in *fideles*; in infideles pauciſſima, edita feruntur. Dodw. ib. § LXIII.

Church, with regard to this prime miracle of *raiſing the dead.*

Sect. 2. The next gift ſaid to have reſided in it, is that *of healing the ſick, and curing all ſorts of diſeaſes:* in favor of which the ancient teſtimonies are more full and expreſs; though with ſome variation, concerning the method of cure. Some affirm, that it was done by *the impoſition of hands* [1]: ſome, *by invoking the name of God, and of Jeſus, and reciting ſome ſtory of his life* [2]. *And others,* by the uſe of *oil:* which was conſecrated by Holy men, and diſpenſed to the people for the cure of their diſeaſes. *Tertullian* tells us, "that a Chriſtian, called *Proculus,* cured the "Emperor *Severus* of a certain diſtemper by the "uſe of oil: for which ſervice that Emperor "was favorable afterwards to the Chriſtians, "and kept *Proculus,* as long as he lived, in his "Palace [3]." And St. *Jerom* affirms, "that "*Hilarion the Monk* uſed to heal all the wounds "of the Huſbandmen and Shepherds with *con*"*ſecrated oil:* and preſerved the life of the ſon-"in-law and daughter of an holy woman called "*Conſtantia,* by anointing them with the

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[1] Ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς κάμνοντας διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν ἰῶνται. Iren. l. ii. c. 57.

[2] Οὐδὲν ἄλλο καλοῦντες ἐπὶ τοὺς δεομένους θεραπείας, ἢ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν, καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὄνομα, μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱστορίας. Con. Celſ. l. iii. p. 124.

[3] Ipſe etiam Severus — Chriſtianorum memor fuit. Nam & *Proculum* Chriſtianum, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requiſivit, & in palatio ſuo habuit uſque ad mortem ejus. Ad Scapul. § 4.

" ſame [1]." Yet theſe cures, if true, might be accounted for probably without a miracle, by the natural power and efficacy of the oil itſelf, ſince, in our days, the bite of vipers, after inflaming a man's arm to a degree which threatened deſtruction to him, is known to have been checked and cured in a ſhort time, by the application of oil: which might perhaps have been the very caſe of *Hilarion's Shepherds.* But be that as it will, the pretence of curing diſeaſes by a miraculous power, was ſo ſucceſsfully maintained in the heathen world by fraud and craft, that when it came to be challenged by the Chriſtians, it was not capable of exciting any attention to it among thoſe, who themſelves pretended to the ſame power; which, tho' the certain effect of impoſture, was yet managed with ſo much art, that the Chriſtians could neither deny nor detect it; but inſiſted always, that it was performed by *Dæmons* or evil Spirits, deluding mankind to their ruin: and from the ſuppoſed reality of the fact, inferred the reaſonableneſs of believing what was more credibly affirmed by the Chriſtians to be performed by the power of the true God. *We do not deny*, ſays *Athenagoras*, that *in different places, cities, and countries, there are ſome extraordinary works performed in the*

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[1] *Benedicto itaque oleo*, univerſi agricolæ atque paſtores, tangentes vulnera, certam ſalutem reſumebant. Hieron. in Vit. Hilarion. Oper. Tom iv. par. ii p. 85. Sed & *Conſtantia* quædam, ſancta fœmina, cujus generum & filiam de morte liberaverat *unctione olei*. Ibid. p. 90.

name of idols, from which ſome have received benefit, others harm. But then he goes on to prove, that they were not performed by God, but by *Dæmons* [1]. “If I ſhould allow, ſays *Origen*, “that there is a Dæmon cunning in medicine, “called *Æſculapius*, who cures diſeaſes; yet I “would ſay to thoſe, who are ſurprized at it, “as well as at the prædictions of *Apollo*, that if “the cure of diſeaſes and prædiction of events, “be things of an indifferent nature, and which “belong to bad, as well as to good beings; “ſhew me that thoſe, who cure and foretell, are “not bad, but good, and worthy to be held in a “manner as Gods [2].”

Whatever proof then the Primitive Church might have among themſelves of this miraculous gift, yet it could have but little effect towards making proſelytes among thoſe, who pretended to the ſame gift; poſſeſſed more largely, and exerted more openly, than in the private aſſemblies of the Chriſtians. For in the Temples of *Æſculapius*, all kinds of diſeaſes were believed to be publickly cured, by the pretended help of that Deity: in proof of which there were erected in each Temple *columns or tables of braſs or marble*, on which a diſtinct narrative of each particular cure was inſcribed. *Pauſanias* writes,

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[1] Τὸ μὲν δὲ κατὰ τόπους ϗ πόλεις ϗ ἔθνη γίνεσθαί τινας ἐπ' ὀνόματι εἰδώλων ἐνεργείας, οὐδ' ἡμεῖς ἀντιλέγομεν. Athenag. Apol. p. 25.

[2] Ἵνα δὲ ϗ ἐῶ, Ἰατρικόν τινα Δαίμονα θεραπεύειν σώματα, τὸν καλούμενον Ἀσκληπιὸν, εἴποιμ' ἂν πρὸς τοὺς θαυμάζοντας τὸ τοιοῦτο. &c. Con. Celſ. l. iii. p. 124.

" that in the Temple at *Epidaurus*, there were " many columns anciently of this kind, and ſix " of them remaining to his time, inſcribed with " the names of men and women, who had been " cured by the God, with an account of their " ſeveral caſes, and the method of their cure: " and that there was an old pillar beſides, which " ſtood apart, dedicated to the memory of *Hippolytus*, who had been raiſed from the " dead [1]." *Strabo* alſo, another grave writer, informs us, " that theſe Temples were con" ſtantly filled with the ſick, imploring the help " of the God: and that they had tables hang" ing around them, in which all the miraculous " cures were deſcribed [2]." There is a remarkable fragment of one of theſe tables ſtill extant, and exhibited by *Gruter* in his collection, as it was found in the ruins of *Æſculapius's* Temple, *in the iſland of the* Tyber, *in* Rome; which gives an account *of two blind men reſtored to ſight by* Æſculapius, *in the open view, and with the loud acclamations of the people, acknowledging the manifeſt power of the God.* Upon which the learned *Montfaucon* makes this reflection, that *in this are ſeen, either the wiles of the Devil, or the tricks*

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[1] Στῆλαι δ' εἱστήκεσαν ἐντὸς τοῦ περιβόλου, τὸ μὲν ἀρχαῖον καὶ πλέονες, ἐπ' ἐμοῦ δὲ ἓξ λοιπαὶ, &c. Corinth. l. ii. c. XXVII.

[2] Καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν πλῆρες ἔχοντος ἀεὶ τῶν τε καμνόντων, καὶ τῶν ἀνακειμένων πινάκων, ἐν οἷς ἀναγεγραμμέναι τυγχάνουσι αἱ θεραπείαι. Strab. l. viii. p. 575. Edit. Amſtel.

of Pagan Prieſts, ſuborning men to counterfeit diſeaſes and miraculous cures [1].

Now though nothing can ſupport the belief and credit of miracles more authentically, than publick monuments, erected in proof and memory of them, at the time when they were performed; yet, in defiance of that authority, it is certain, that all thoſe heathen miracles were pure forgeries, contrived to delude the credulous multitude. And in truth, this particular claim of *curing diſeaſes miraculouſly*, affords great room for ſuch a deluſion, and a wide field for the exerciſe of craft. Every man's experience has taught him, that diſeaſes thought fatal and deſperate, are often ſurprizingly healed of themſelves, by ſome ſecret and ſudden effort of nature, impenetrable to the ſkill of man: but to aſcribe this preſently to a miracle, as weak and ſuperſtitious minds are apt to do; to the prayers of the living, or the interceſſions of the dead; is what neither ſound reaſon nor true religion will juſtify. Wherefore when the narratives of theſe pretended cures are delivered to us by partial and intereſted, or by weak and credulous men, they will always furniſh reaſon to ſuſpect, that the relators were either deluded themſelves, or willing to delude others: and unleſs we know more preciſely in this caſe the real bounds between nature and miracle, we cannot pay any great regard to ſuch ſtories; eſpecially when we are informed at the ſame time by the Chriſtians themſelves, that the ſame cures were performed alſo by Knaves and Impoſtors, of all ſects and nations; by *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Heretics*; which, according to the principles of thoſe days, were aſcribed either to the power of *Dæmons*, or to the magical force of amulets and charms.

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[1] See Montfauc. Antiq. Tom. ii. par. i. l. iv. c. 6. it. Gruter. Inſcr. p. LXXI.

Sect. 3. But the moſt eminent and celebrated of all the miraculous powers of the primitive Church was, the gift *of caſting out Devils*, or the cure of *Dæmoniacs*. To this the ancient Fathers and Apologiſts make the moſt frequent appeals; and on this they lay the greateſt ſtreſs, towards evincing the divinity of the Chriſtian Religion. It is not eaſy however to collect from their accounts, what was the real caſe of theſe *Dæmoniacs*, and the proper nature of their malady. The Fathers indeed themſelves ſeem to have been fully perſuaded, and labor to perſuade every body elſe, that they were actually poſſeſſed and tormented by Devils, or evil Spirits: yet many learned men of modern times have imagined them rather to have been affected by the *Epilepſy*, or *falling ſickneſs*. Mr. *Dodwell* himſelf takes their caſe to have been of this kind, and curable *by the ordinary way of medicine*, as well as the extraordinary one of miracle [1].

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[1] Morbum itaque caducum, quem Comitialem ſeu Regium appellant, curabant paſſim exorciſmis ſuis coævi *Tertulliani* Chriſtiani. Nec enim ego alium cenſuerim,

And it is certain, that the effects conſtantly aſcribed to it ſeem to be nothing elſe but the ordinary ſymptoms of an *Epilepſy*, as they are deſcribed by the Phyſicians. *Juſtin* ſpeaks of them *as being thrown down always to the ground, by the Devils who poſſeſſed them* [1]. And *Chryſoſtom*, in his elaborate conſolation to *Stagirius*, who was alſo poſſeſſed, recites all the particulars of his caſe, as they were related to him by a common friend; *the convulſion of his hands, the diſtortion of his eyes, the foam of his mouth, his horrid and inarticulate voice, the tremor of his body, and the long privation of his ſenſes* [2]. St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, ſpeaking of a woman alſo in the ſame caſe, ſays, *that groaning with a terrible and inarticulate voice, different from human, ſhe fell flat on the ground, tearing her hair, her eyes diſtorted, her mouth foaming: nor did the Devil deſiſt from ſtrangling her*, &c. [3]. Then as to what theſe

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quo laborârint *Dæmoniaci illi a Dæmone præcipitati.*—Nihil enim impedit, quo minus iidem per medicinam poſſint etiam curari—Diſſert. in Iren. ii. § XLVII. p. 175.

[1] Καὶ οἱ ψυχαῖς ἀποθανόντων λαμβανόμενοι καὶ ῥιπτόμενοι ἄνθρωποι, οὓς δαιμονολήπτους καὶ μαινομένους καλοῦσι πάντες. Apol. i. p. 28.

[2] Τὴν στρέβλωσιν τῶν χειρῶν, τὴν διαστροφὴν τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος ἀφρὸν, &c. Tom. i. p. 156. E. Edit. Benedict.

Ita etiam *Plinius*, corruens morbo comitiali, [Hiſt. N. 28. 6.] atque ita quoque S. Cyprianus—irrepentes in corporibus occulte, mentes terrent, membra diſtorquent, valetudinem frangunt, &c. De idolor. van. p. 206.

[3] Πνεύματι δαιμονίῳ στρεβλωθεῖσα, καὶ βρυχηθμῷ θηριώδει παρὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φωνὴν ἀνοιμώξασα, πίπτει πρηνὴς, &c. in Vit. Greg. Thaumat. p. 973. B. Oper. Edit. Pariſ.

Fathers declare, concerning their power of *laſhing, burning, and tormenting* the Devils; and of their *groaning and howling* under the torture of the Chriſtian exorciſm, ſuch an imagination might eaſily be conceived, from the ſtrange convulſions of the body, and the hollow ſighs and groans which commonly attend ſuch fits. And the other circumſtances likewiſe, ſo conſtantly atteſted by them all, concerning *the ſpeeches and confeſſions of the Devils*; *their anſwering to all quæſtions*; *owning themſelves to be wicked ſpirits*; *telling whence they came, and whither they were going, and pleading for favor and eaſe from the hands of the Exorciſts*, may not improbably be accounted for, either by the diſordered ſtate of the patient, anſwering wildly and at random to any quæſtions propoſed, or by the arts of impoſture and contrivance between the parties concerned in the act.

This, I dare ſay, will appear probable to every impartial reader, who, from the credulous and enthuſiaſtic diſpoſition of theſe Fathers, and their preconceived and erroneous notions about the origin and power of Dæmons, will be apt to conclude, that they were either induced by their prejudices, to give too haſty a credit to theſe pretended Poſſeſſions; or carried away by their zeal, to aſſiſt even in ſupporting a deluſion, which was uſeful to the Chriſtian cauſe. And tho' this may ſound harſh in the ears of many, it will not appear ſtrange to thoſe, who have given any attention to the hiſtory of mankind;

which will always ſuggeſt this ſad reflection, That the greateſt zealots in religion, or the leaders of ſects and parties, whatever purity or principles they pretend to, have ſeldom ſcrupled to make uſe of a commodious lie, for the advancement of what they call the truth. And with regard to theſe very Fathers, there is not one of them, as an eminent writer of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory declares, who made any ſcruple in thoſe ages, of uſing *the hyperbolical ſtyle*, to advance the honor of God, and the ſalvation of men [1]. For it is certain, that the greateſt part of the wonderful things, which they relate, are in themſelves utterly incredible; and ſuch of them as happen to be the moſt diſtinctly deſcribed, carry always the greateſt marks of art and contrivance, for the ſake of ſerving ſome particular purpoſe. For example, *Tertullian*, who was an utter enemy to plays and public ſhews in the Theaters, wrote a book, to deter all Chriſtians from frequenting them, in which he tells the following ſtory: "An example happened, ſays he, as the Lord is witneſs, of a "woman, who went to the Theater, and came "back with a Devil in her: whereupon when "the unclean ſpirit was urged and threatened "in the office of exorciſing, for having dared to "attack one of the faithful; *I have done nothing*, "replied he, *but what is very fair, for I found*

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[1] In honorem Dei, ſalutemque hominum, hyperbolica oratione uti, nemo tunc temporis religioni ducebat. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. p. 681.

"*her on my own ground.*" He adds a ſecond ſtory, ſtill more dreadful, of another woman, "who, in the very night after ſhe had ſeen a "tragedy in the Theater, had her winding-ſheet "ſhewn to her in a viſion, in which ſhe was "reproached by name, with the Tragedian, "whom ſhe had been ſeeing, and did not live "above five days after [1]."

Now in this laſt caſe, it is not improbable, that a poor weak woman, who went to ſleep under the conſciouſneſs of a grievous ſin committed by her, might, by the terrors of a dream, be thrown into a diſorder that put an end to her life. But in the firſt, though God himſelf is appealed to, for the truth of it, yet when we reflect on the principles of thoſe times, and the particular warmth of *Tertullian's* zeal, we cannot but ſuſpect, that the ſmart anſwer of the Devil was contrived to enforce what he was ſo warmly inculcating, the horrible ſin and dangerous conſequence of frequenting the public Theaters.

It is very remarkable, that all the Fathers, who lay ſo great a ſtreſs on this particular gift of caſting out Devils, yet allow the ſame power both to the *Jews* and the Gentiles, as well before, as after our Saviour's coming. *Juſtin Martyr*, in his dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*, ſays,

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[1] Nam & exemplum accidit, Domino teſte, ejus mulieris, quæ theatrum adiit, & inde cum Dæmonio rediit. Itaque in exorciſmo, cum oneraretur immundus ſpiritus, quod auſus eſſet fidelem adgredi; Conſtanter & juſtiſſime quidem, inquit, feci, in meo eam inveni, &c.——De Spectac. 26.

" that all Devils yield and ſubmit to the name " of *Jeſus*, when they would not, to any other " name of their Kings, Prophets, or Patriarchs: " yet if any ſhould exorciſe them in the name " of the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, " they would in like manner ſubmit. For " your Exorciſts, adds he, as well as the Gen" tiles, uſe this art in exorciſing, together with " certain fumes, and ligatures [1]." And the *Jews*, ſays *Irenæus*, even now, by this ſame invocation of the name of God, drive away Devils [2].

Origen, in his diſpute with *Celſus*, aſſerting the deſcent of the *Jews* from *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, ſays, " that theſe names, joined to " that of God, have ſuch power, that not onely " their own nation uſe them in their prayers, " and in caſting out Devils, but all other In" chanters and Magicians whatſoever: and " that in magical books, the ſame invocation " and uſe of God's name is often found, as pe" culiar to the art, and effectual againſt De" vils [3]." And ſpeaking of *Abraham's* great merit, he obſerves, " that it is not *Moſes* onely, " who celebrates it, but that many of thoſe, who

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[1] Ἤδη μέντοι οἱ ἐξ ὑμῶν ἐπορκισταὶ τῇ τέχνῃ ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη χρώμενοι ἐξορκίζουσι, καὶ θυμιάμασι καὶ καταδέσμοις χρῶνται. Dial. par. ii. p. 321.

[2] Et propter hoc Judæi uſque nunc hac ipſa adfatione Dæmonas effugant.— L. ii. c. 5. p. 123.

[3] Ὧν τοσοῦτον δύναται τὰ ὀνόματα συναπτόμενα τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ προσηγορίᾳ, ὡς οὐ μόνον τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθνους χρῆσθαι ἐν ταῖς πρὸς θεὸν εὐχαῖς, καὶ ἐν τῷ κατεπᾴδειν δαίμονας, &c. Con. Celſ. l. iv. p. 183, 4.

" charm or drive out Devils, call upon the God " of *Abraham*, without knowing even who *Abraham* was [1]." Again, " if a man, ſays " he, invoke or exorciſe by the name of the God " of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, the Devils will " obey, and do what they are commanded; " but if he tranſlate thoſe names, according to " their meaning, into any other language, they " will have no force at all. The ſame, adds " he, is true of the word *Sabaoth*, ſo much uſed " in incantations: if it be applied in its original " *Hebrew* it is effectual; but if tranſlated into " another tongue, ſo as to put for it *the Lord of* " *Hoſts*, it avails nothing, if we believe the " ſkilful in theſe matters [2]."

Joſephus writes, " that *Solomon* was particu" larly inſtructed by God in the art of caſting

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[1] Διὸ παραλαμβάνουσι τὴν, Θεὸς Ἀβραάμ, λέξιν, οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι δὲ τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἀβραάμ. ib. l. i. p. 17.

[2] Τοῦ δὲ ὅμοιον ἐροῦμεν καὶ περὶ τῆς Σαβαὼθ φωνῆς πολλαχοῦ τῶν ἐπῳδῶν παραλαμβανομένης· ὅτι εἰ μεταλαμβάνομεν τὸ ὄνομα εἰς τὸ, Κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων.——οὐδὲν ποιήσομεν. ib. l. v. p. 262.

N. B. From what is here ſaid by *Origen*, and the other Fathers, it appears, that the power of caſting out Devils, was conſidered as a peculiar gift, or art rather, grounded on certain rules, which were taught and delivered in books; and was common both to the Jews and the Heathens, as well as to the Chriſtians; and, among them all, was adminiſtered by a particular ſet of men, called *Exorciſts:* who about the time of *Origen's* death, or the middle of the third Century, began to be reckoned among the inferior orders of the Church: [Vid. Euſeb. l. vi. c. 43.] The form of whoſe ordination is given us by the learned *Bingham* [Antiqu. lib. iii. c. 4. § 5.]

“ out Devils, for the benefit of mankind; and “ that he left behind him a receipt of thoſe “ charms and exorciſms, by which he uſed to “ drive them out: which ſame method was the “ moſt effectual even to his time. For I ſaw, “ ſays he, one of my countrymen, *Eleazar*, caſting out Devils, in the preſence of *Veſpaſian*, “ his ſons and officers, and a multitude of ſoldiers. His method was this: he applied to “ the noſe of a perſon poſſeſſed a ring, which “ had a certain drug or root under the ſeal of it, “ which *Solomon* had preſcribed; and ſo, by “ the ſmell of the ring, he drew out the Devil, “ through the noſtrils of the patient; who fell “ preſently to the ground: upon which, he adjured the Devil never to return, rehearſing the “ name of *Solomon*, with certain charms, which “ he had compoſed and left behind him; and “ being deſirous to convince the company, that “ he was really indued with this power, to which “ he pretended, he placed a certain cup or veſſel “ filled with water, at a little diſtance from the “ perſon poſſeſſed, and commanded the Devil, “ as he was going out of him, to overturn the “ cup, ſo as to give the ſpectators a manifeſt “ proof, that he had quitted the body of the “ man [1].” Which ſhews, in contradiction to what *Juſtin Martyr* affirmed above, that beſides the name of *Jeſus*, the Devils were ſubject likewiſe to that of *Solomon*.

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[1] Καὶ αὐτὴ μέχρι νῦν παρ' ἡμῖν ἡ θεραπεία πλεῖστον ἰσχύει, ἱστόρησα γάρ τινα Ἐλεάζαρον, &c. Antiq. Jud. l. VIII. c. ii. § 5.

Now it will be granted, I ſuppoſe, by all men of ſenſe, that theſe *Jewiſh* and Gentile Exorciſts were mere Knaves and Impoſtors; who, by their tricks and falſe miracles, contrived to delude the credulous multitude, in order to acquire gain or power to themſelves, and to keep their people firm to the *Jewiſh* or Heatheniſh rites, in oppoſition to the Chriſtian. *Ulpian* the lawyer ſpeaks of *Exorciſm* in general, as a term of art uſed by Impoſtors: by whom he is ſuppoſed by ſome, to mean the *Jewiſh*, by others, the *Chriſtian Exorciſts* [1]. But *Tertullian*, and all the Fathers in general, declare, that theſe Magicians and wandering Jugglers performed many wonderful things, above the force of human power, which they wholly aſcribe to the aſſiſtance of Dæmons. And if they were ſo far deluded by thoſe *Jewiſh* and Gentile pretenders, as to take ſuch ſenſeleſs charms, and tricks of legerdemain, for the effects of a ſupernatural power, their prejudices would operate much more ſtrongly in favor of their own Impoſtors, who had taken up the ſame trade: or if they ſaw through the cheat of the Gentile practitioners, yet on account of the credit which they had gained with the people, and the difficulty of detecting the fraud, they might think it convenient, perhaps, to oppoſe one cheat to another, and ſet up rival powers of their own, in oppoſition to thoſe of their adverſaries, in hopes of beating them at their own weapons.

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[1] Bingham. Antiqu. B. v. c. 4. § 3.

For it is very hard to believe what *Origen* declares above, that the Devils, for the ſake of doing the greater miſchief to men, *uſed to poſſeſs and deſtroy their cattel.* In confirmation of which, St. *Jerom* has related a moſt ridiculous ſtory, in his life of St. *Hilarion* the Monk: where, after a narrative of many caſes of Devils, expelled by that ſaint from the bodies of men, he adds, "but "it is to little purpoſe to talk of men; brute "animals alſo were dayly brought to him, mad "or poſſeſſed: among the reſt, a *Bactrian Ca-* "*mel*, of an enormous ſize, which had already "deſtroyed many people: above thirty men "were employed to drag him along with the "ſtrongeſt ropes. His eyes were bloody; his "mouth foaming; his tongue rolling and "ſwoln; and his ſtrange roaring above all ter- "rors: the old man ordered it to be let looſe: "upon which all who were about him ran away "immediately: the ſaint came forward alone, "and in the *Syriac* tongue, ſaid, *Thou doſt not af-* "*fright me, Devil, with all that bulk of body:* "*thou art one and the ſame in a little fox, or in a* "*camel:* and ſo he ſtood firm with his arm "ſtretched out; and as the beaſt advanced to- "wards him, furious and ready to devour him, "it preſently fell down with its head to the "ground; ſo that all preſent were amazed at "the ſudden change, from ſo great a fierceneſs to "ſuch a tameneſs. Upon which the old man took "occaſion to teach them, that the Devil uſed to "ſeize cattel, out of his hatred to men, to whom

“ he bore ſo great a grudge, as to wiſh, not onely that they, but that all which they had, “ might periſh.” To this ſtory I cannot forbear adding, what is likewiſe affirmed by the ſame *Jerom*, of the ſame *Hilarion*; that *he was ſo full of the power of the Holy Spirit, as to be able to diſcover, from the ſmell of the bodies and the cloaths of men, or of any thing elſe, which they had but touched, to what particular Dæmon, or to what vice, they were ſeverally ſubject.* Now though this good Father invokes *the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, in his attempt to deſcribe a life ſo wonderful*, yet all, who read it, muſt needs be perſuaded, that out of his zeal and warm affection to the Monkiſh Order, which he profeſſed, and from a deſire to advance its credit in the world, he either wholly invented, or at leaſt wilfully propagated all theſe extravagant tales, which he himſelf could not poſſibly believe: “ The time, “ ſays he, would fail me, if I ſhould attempt to “ relate all the wonderful works that were per“ formed by him—wherefore, by the influence “ of his example, *innumerable Monaſteries began* “ *to be founded through all Palæſtine*; and all the “ Monks ran eagerly to *Hilarion*,” &c [1]. This was the real purpoſe of St. *Jerom's* zeal; this the fruit of his fictitious miracles. But to return to the *Dæmoniacs*. Since this gift of caſting out Devils is what the Fathers, as I have ſaid above, lay the greateſt ſtreſs upon, and to which they make the moſt frequent appeals, it may be proper to ſtrengthen what I have already been declaring upon it, by a few particular obſervations, which I would recommend to the attention of the reader.

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[1] Vid. Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 82, 83, &c.

Tempus me deficiet, ſi voluero univerſa ſigna, quæ ab eo perpetrata ſunt, dicere.— Exemplo itaque ejus innumerabilia Monaſteria per totum Palæſtinam eſſe cœperunt, & ad eum omnes Monachi certatim currere, &c.

1*ſt*, That there is ſuch an uniformity in all the primitive accounts of them, though given by different Fathers and in different ages, *of the Devils being ſcourged, burned, and tortured by the Chriſtian Exorciſts*; *and of their howlings, diſcourſes, and confeſſions*, that they all ſeem to have been caſt in the ſame mould; and to have been the copies rather of one original ſtory, tranſcribed by the later writers from the earlier, than the natural deſcriptions of what each of them had ſeverally ſeen, at different times, and in diſtant places [1].

2*dly*, That the perſons thus poſſeſſed, and in whom the Devils uſed to hold Diſcourſes, were called, by the primitive Chriſtians, Ἐγγαστριμύθοι, or *Ventriloquiſts*; becauſe they were believed *to ſpeak out of the belly through the navel* [2]. Thus in a book aſcribed to *Juſtin Martyr*, containing a number of Quæſtions, with anſwers to them, for the uſe of the *Orthodox*, one of the Quæſtions is this; "If all the arts of deluſion are aboliſhed by the coming of Chriſt, how comes it to "paſs, that Dæmons ſtill ſpeak by thoſe, who "are called *Ventriloquiſts*, and that they do not "make Chriſtianity ridiculous and contemptible, by ſhewing forth the works of impoſture, "and uttering oracular prædictions in the bodies "of Chriſtians [1]?"

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[1] See what I have collected above on this ſubject, from *Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian*, and *Lactantius*. Thus Mr. *Whiſton* alſo obſerves, *that a good deal of what is ſaid upon it by* Minucius Felix, *is made uſe of by* Cyprian, *ſoon after his time, and that almoſt verbatim.* Account of the *Dæmoniacs*, p. 42.

[1] See Bing. Antiq. l. xvi, c. 5. § 4.

Now many of us have ſeen, and may ſtill ſee perhaps at this day, a ſort of theſe *Ventriloquiſts*, who, by a particular formation of their organs, managed by art and practice, could ſpeak in ſuch a manner, as to perſuade the company, that the voice did not proceed from them, but from ſome inviſible being: which they could direct likewiſe ſo, as to make it ſeem to come from what part of the room they pleaſed: by which means, weak and ignorant people have been terrified almoſt out of their ſenſes, believing it to be the *voice of a Spirit or Dæmon.* If we ſuppoſe then, that there were any Artiſts of this kind among thoſe ancient Chriſtians, as there undoubtedly were among the ancient Gentiles, it is eaſy to imagine, what ſtrange and ſurprizing feats might be performed, by a correſpondence between the *Ventriloquiſt* and the *Exorciſt*, ſo as to delude the moſt ſenſible and ſagacious of their audience, prepoſſeſſed with the belief of theſe diabolical poſſeſſions, and void of all ſuſpicion, that ſuch effects could poſſibly be produced by any human art or natural cauſe.

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[1] Vid. Quæſt. & Reſponſ. ad Orthodox. Quæſt. 8.

3dly, From the teſtimony of Antiquity itſelf it is evident, that many of their Dæmoniacs could not poſſibly be cured by all the power of the Exorciſts; and that the cures, which are pretended to have been wrought on any, were but temporary, and appear to have been the ceſſation rather of a particular fit, or acceſs of the diſtemper, than the real expulſion of a Dæmon. This may be clearly collected from the method of treating them in the primitive Church, as it was regulated by ſeveral Canons and rules, made for that purpoſe by Biſhops and Councils, injoining, "that they ſhould not be received to "baptiſm, but in the intervals of their diſorder; "nor to the Communion, unleſs they ſhewed "ſigns of piety and ſobriety, ſo as not to expoſe "and blaſpheme the myſteries; in which caſe "they might communicate now and then: that "they ſhould never be ordained, or taken into "any order of the Clergy; nor allowed to pray "in common with the congregation; but be "produced always ſeparately, and commanded "onely to bow down their heads, while the reſt "of the aſſembly were offering up a prayer for "them." In different Churches, however, a different diſcipline was obſerved with regard to them; for in ſome they were admitted to baptiſm, and even to dayly communion; by which means many are affirmed to have been relieved, when all the arts of the Exorciſts had been tried upon them in vain [1]. Now theſe caſes manifeſtly ſhew, that this celebrated gift, as it was managed by the primitive Church, was not able to work an abſolute cure; or to drive out the Devils ſo effectually, as to reduce the patients to a permanent ſtate of ſanity: ſo as to render them ordinarily capable, either of baptiſm, or the Euchariſt, or of joining even with the congregation, in the dayly prayers of the Church. Whence we may reaſonably conclude, that it was nothing elſe, but a falſe mimickry of that genuin power, which was exerciſed by our Lord, and conferred afterwards on his Apoſtles: a power which never did it's work by halves, or left it's cures imperfect. For, as we learn from the Goſpel, *Mary Magdalen*, from whom *ſeven Devils* were caſt out, continued ever after in her ſober ſenſes; accompanying and miniſtring on all occaſions to our Lord, to the time of his death: and the man alſo, out of whom a *Legion* of them was ejected, was reſtored at once to perfect health both of mind and body, and ſent away to proclaim in *Decapolis*, and the neighbouring country, the miraculous cure which *Jeſus* had wrought upon him [2].

4*thly*, There is another circumſtance belonging to theſe primitive Dæmoniacs, of which the reader perhaps may deſire ſome farther explication; I mean the great numbers of them, which appear to have ſubſiſted in thoſe early ages: whoſe chief habitation was within a part of the Church, allotted to them for that purpoſe; in which, as in a kind of Hoſpital, they were committed to the care of the exorciſts: whoſe buſineſs it was, "to pray over them on ſome occa-"ſions, and to provide their dayly food, and "keep them employed in ſome bodily exerciſe "and innocent buſineſs, of ſweeping the Church "and the like, to prevent the more violent agi-"tations of Satan, and leſt he ſhould be tempt-"ed by their idleneſs to renew his attacks upon "them [1]." Which method of relieving ſo miſerable a tribe of helpleſs mortals, will account for the numbers, with which the Churches were ſtored; as well as for the confidence of thoſe challenges, made to the Heathens, by the Chriſtian Apologiſts, to come and ſee at any hour, and any warning, how they could *torment, and laſh, and burn, and drive the evil ſpirits* out of them: while they kept ſuch numbers of them in conſtant pay, always ready for the ſhew; tried and diſciplined by their Exorciſts, to an habit of groaning and howling, and to give proper anſwers to all quæſtions which ſhould be demanded of them.

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[1] See Bing. Antiq. book xi. c. v. § iii. it. ibid. book xv. c. iv. § xvi. it. ib. xvii. c. v. § iii, &c.

[2] Luke viii. 2. Matt v. 20. Luke viii. 39.

It is obſervable alſo, in the laſt place, that this power of *exorciſing Dæmoniacs, or caſting out Devils,* which had hitherto been in the hands onely of the meaner ſort of the Chriſtian layety, was put under the direction of the Clergy, by the

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[1] Bing. book III. c. IV. § VII.

Council of Laodicea, about the year of Chriſt three hundred and ſixty ſeven, in which it was decreed, that *none ſhould be Exorciſts, but thoſe who were appointed by the Biſhop.* After which appropriation of it, as Mr. *Whiſton* informs us, "few or none of the Clergy, nor indeed of the "Layety, were any longer able to caſt out De-"vils: ſo that the old Chriſtian exorciſm, or "prayer for the *Energumens* in the Church, be-"gan ſoon after to be omitted as wholly uſe-"leſs [1]." Which ſudden failure of ſo eminent a gift ſeems to be aſcribed by him to that fatal ſtep of this *unhappy Council*, as he calls it; as if, by their preſumptuous attempt to controul the divine power, they had provoked God to withdraw it. But though this ſolution of the caſe may be agreeable to the character and principles of that very learned and pious writer, yet it is more agreeable to reaſon, and the experience of mankind, to ſuppoſe, that the licentious abuſe of this imaginary power, by the many falſe and impudent pretenſions, of crafty impoſtors on the one hand, and wrong-headed Enthuſiaſts on the other, had brought ſuch ſcandal on Chriſtianity itſelf, that the Clergy were forced at laſt to interpoſe, and take the affair into their own hands. For that this was really the caſe, is manifeſtly ſhewn by the event: ſince the exerciſe of this gift was no ſooner ſubjected to any regulation, even by thoſe who favored and deſired to ſupport it, than it gradually decreaſed and expired.

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[1] See Mr. *Whiſton's* Account of *Dæmoniacs*, p. 53.

§ 4. The next miraculous gift aſcribed to the primitive Church, is that of *Prophetic viſions, and extatic trances, and the diſcovery of men's hearts:* for theſe ſeem to be the fruit of one and the ſame ſpirit: which exerted itſelf chiefly about the end of the ſecond and the beginning of the third century, through *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days. "The divine cenſure, ſays *Cyprian*, does not ceaſe to chaſtiſe us, neither by "night nor by day; for beſides nightly viſions, "even boys among us are filled with the Holy "Ghoſt, and, in fits of extaſy, ſee, hear, and "utter things, by which the Lord thinks fit "to admoniſh and inſtruct us [1]." This ecſtaſy was a temporary madneſs, or loſs of ſenſes, and is called by *Tertullian, the ſpiritual virtue, in which Prophecy conſiſts* [2]. *Suidas* ſays, that of all the kinds of fury or madneſs, that of the Poets and Prophets was alone to be wiſhed for [3].

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[1] Caſtigare nos itaque divina cenſura nec noctibus deſinit nec diebus. Præter nocturnas enim viſiones, per dies quoque impletur apud nos Spiritu ſancto puerorum innocens ætas, quæ in extaſi videt, & audit, & loquitur ea, quibus nos Dominus monere, & inſtruere dignatur. Epiſt. ad Cler. ix. p. 22. Ed. Nic. Rigalt.

[2] Quum in illum Deus amentiam immiſit, ſpiritualem vim, qua conſtat prophetia. De Anim. c. 21, it. 24.

[3] Τῶν μανιῶν—αἱ δὲ αἱρεταὶ ϗ εὐχῆς ἄξιαι, οἷαι τῶν ποιητῶν ϗ τῶν χρησμολόγων. in voce Μανίαι.

Mr. *Dodwell* obſerves, "that viſions were peculiar to the young, dreams to the old: becauſe it required a great ſtrength of body to ſupport the violence of ſuch divine agitations [1]." *Philo* the Jew, treating of the ſame ecſtaſies, with which the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Teſtament uſed to be affected, reaſons thus: "The human mind, ſays he, is ſymbolically called the Sun by *Moſes*—while our mind therefore ſhines, and exerts itſelf within us, ſpreading, as it were, a meridian light through the Soul, we are then in our right ſenſes, without any divine influx: but when the mind goes down, then a divine ecſtaſy and prophetic madneſs fall upon us: for when the divine light ſhines, the human ſets: and when that ſets, this again riſes; and this is what uſually happens to the prophetic race: for the mind is driven out of us, when the divine ſpirit comes in; and when this again quits us, the other returns; for it is not fit, that mortal ſhould cohabit with immortal [2]."

From theſe teſtimonies we may collect, that the Prophecy of the Primitive Church by *viſion* or *ecſtaſy*, was of the ſame kind, as to it's outward appearance, with *that divination by fury*, as it was called among the Gentiles, which was practiſed by the *Delphic Pythia*, and *Cumæan Sibyl*, when agitated by the pretended power and inſtinct of the God [1]. Of which *Cicero* ſays, in way of raillery, "what authority can that "madneſs have, which you call divine; that a "wiſe man ſhould not be able to foreſee, what "a madman can; and that he, who has loſt all "human ſenſes, ſhould preſently acquire divine "ones [2]."

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[1] Plane ſenibus ita *ſomnia* aptantur, ut Juvenibus *Viſiones*. Vehemens nimirum illa humorum agitatio non erat niſi in ætatis vigore toleranda, &c. Vid. Diſſert. Cyprian. IV. § 40.

[2] Ἥλιον δὲ διὰ συμβόλου τὸν ἡμέτερον νοῦν καλεῖ——ὅτε μὲν γὰρ φῶς ἐπιλάμψει τὸ θεῖον, δύεται τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, ὅτε δ' ἐκεῖνο δύει, τοῦτ' ἀνίσχει καὶ ἀνατέλλει. τῷ δὲ προφητικῷ γένει φιλεῖ τοῦτο συμβαίνειν.——θέμις γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι, θνητὸν ἀθανάτῳ συνοικῆσαι, &c. Philo. Quis Divinor. Hær. Oper. Tom. i. p. 511. Edit. Lond. 1742.

Montanus the Heretic, and his female Aſſociates, ſeem to have been the Authors of theſe prophetic trances, towards the end of the ſecond century; and acquired great credit by their *viſions and ecſtaſies*, in which they acted their part ſo well, by feigned diſtortions and convulſive agitations of the body, as to appear to be out of their ſenſes; and in thoſe fits uttered many wild prophecies and prædictions, which they impoſed upon the people for divine revelations; and by affecting at the ſame time a peculiar ſanctity and ſeverity of diſcipline, gathered a great number of diſciples [1], who firſt raiſed and propagated that ſpirit of enthuſiaſm in the Church, which ſubſiſted in it for near a century, under the title of *viſion and prophecy*; and then gradually ſunk into utter contempt.

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[1] Ineſt igitur inanimis præſagitio—ea ſi exarſit acrius, furor appellatur, quum a corpore animus abſtractus divino inſtinctu concitatur. Cic. de Div. I. 31.

——ea fræna furenti
Concutit, et ſtimulos ſub pectore vertit Apollo.
Ut primum ceſſit furor, & rabida ora quierunt.
Virg. Æn. vi. 102.

[2] Quid vero auctoritatis habet furor iſte, quem divinum vocatis, ut quæ ſapiens non videat, ea videat inſanus; & is, qui humanos ſenſus amiſerit, divinos adſecutus ſit? De Div. II. 54.

Tertullian, a writer of this enthuſiaſtic turn, ſevere in his manners, and ſtiff in his opinions, wrote with great vehemence againſt Plays and and Shews: in which, as we have ſeen above, he made great uſe of viſions, towards enforcing his argument. He wrote another book to prove, *that it was a Sin for a Soldier, to wear a garland or crown on any occaſion, and that a Chriſtian ſhould rather ſuffer martyrdom than ſubmit to it* [2]: and in a third book he affirms it to be rank idolatry, *to deck their doors with garlands or flowers, on Feſtival days, according to the cuſtom of the Heathens:* "and calls the name of God to witneſs, that he "knew a perſon, who had been grievouſly cha-"ſtiſed in a viſion, becauſe his ſervants, even "without his knowledge and in his abſence, "had crowned the door with flowers, on ſome "occaſion of public joy [3]." He wrote a treatiſe likewiſe, to prove the ſoul of man to be *corporeal and of human ſhape:* and for the truth of his opinion, appeals to his extatic maid abovementioned, of whom he tells this ſtory: that, "as he happened to be diſcourſing on the nature of the ſoul, ſhe fell into one of her trances: and as ſoon as the ſervice was over, and "the people diſmiſſed, ſhe came, as uſual, to "relate to him what ſhe had ſeen; which was "always carefully taken down in writing, in "order to be examined: when ſhe declared, "that there was ſhewn to her, among other "things, an human ſoul in bodily form; yet ſo, "as to appear to be a ſpirit: not of a void and "empty quality, but what might even be handled, tender and lucid, of an airy color, and "in all points of human ſhape [1]." Which wild dream of a frantic, or fiction rather of a ſilly woman, this Father applies as the teſtimony of God himſelf, to evince the certainty of his opinion. Laſtly, in another book, written to prove, that women ought always *to wear a veil*, he declares, *that God, in a viſion to a certain ſiſter, had preſcribed to her, by a ſpecial revelation, the exact length and meaſure of the veil* [2]."

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[1] Vid. Cave's Hiſt. litt. Vol. i. p. 74. it. Jo. Cleric. Hiſt. Eccleſ. ad Ann. CLVII.

[2] Vid. lib. de Corona.

[3] Ex auctoritate quoque Dei conteſtor — ſcio fratrem per viſionem eadem nocte caſtigatum graviter, quod januam ejus ſubito, annuntiatis gaudiis publicis, ſervi coronaſſent, &c. De Idololat. 15.

Now it is eaſy to imagine, how *Tertullian* might be impoſed upon by the craft of theſe extatic viſionaries; and by the warmth of his temper and force of his prejudices, be drawn to eſpouſe any deluſion, that flattered his particular zeal and favorite opinions. But it is difficult to account for the ſame conduct in his ſcholar *Cyprian*; a man of a more acute head, and ſober mind; but fond of power and Epiſcopal Authority; whoſe character would tempt us to ſuſpect that he was the inventor, rather than the believer of ſuch idle ſtories; and the director, rather than the dupe of ſuch ſenſeleſs viſionaries. Yet in all quæſtionable points of doctrine or diſcipline, which he had a mind to introduce into the Chriſtian worſhip, we find him conſtantly appealing to the teſtimony of *heavenly viſions and divine revelations. It is certain*, ſays Mr. *Dodwell*, *that all things of great moment, which related to the public ſtate of the Church, were foretold to him in viſions* [1]. For inſtance, in a letter to *Cæcilius*, he declares, that he had received a divine admonition, *to mix water with wine in the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, in order to render it effectual* [2]. In another to the Clergy, concerning certain Prieſts, who had reſtored ſome lapſed Chriſtians too haſtily to the Communion of the Church, he threatens them, to execute, *what he was ordered to do againſt them, in a viſion, if they did not deſiſt* [1]. He makes the ſame threat to one *Pupianus*, who had ſpoken ill of him, and withdrawn himſelf from his communion [2]: where his Editor *Rigaltius* makes this remark, “ that the argument of viſions and divine revelations, which *Cyprian* ſo frequently uſes, is a weapon of great force in the hands of ſo good a man; otherwiſe a vain and contemptible one, ſince crafty Sophiſts might eaſily invent ſuch viſions, in favor of any cauſe, to delude the ſimple and unwary [3].”

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[1] Forte neſcio quid de anima diſſerebamus, cum ea ſoror in Spiritu eſſet. Poſt tranſacta ſolennia, dimiſſa plebe— inter cetera, inquit, oſtenſa eſt mihi anima corporaliter, &c. Hoc viſio, & Deus teſtis, & Apoſtolus Chariſmatum in Eccleſia futurorum Sponſor.—De Anima, c. ix.

[2] Nobis Dominus etiam revelationibus, velaminis ſpatia metatus eſt. Nam cuidam Sorori noſtræ Angelus in Somnis, &c. De Virgin. Veland. 17.

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[1] Adeo familiares *Cypriano* erant hujuſmodi viſiones, ut diſciplinæ etiam Eccleſiaſticæ exercitio illas acceperit, aliaſque deinceps expectaret, &c. Diſſert. Cyprian. IV. § 20.

Ita conſtat gravioris momenti omnia, quæ quidem publicum Eccleſiæ ſtatum attinerent, eſſe iſtiuſmodi viſionibus prædicta. Ibid. § 21.

[2] Nec nos putes, frater cariſſime, noſtra et humana conſcribere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter aſſumere.—Sed quando aliquid Deo aſpirante & mandante præcipitur, neceſſe eſt Domino ſervus fidelis obtemperet—admonitos autem nos ſcias, ut calix, qui in commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino offeratur, &c. Epiſt. LXIII.

In a letter likewiſe to the Clergy and the People, *Cyprian* tells them, “ how he had been admoniſhed and directed by God, to ordain one *Numidicus* a Prieſt; who, by his perſuaſive exhortations, had ſent a large number of Martyrs before him to the other world, either ſtoned or burnt to death; and beheld even with joy, the wife of his boſom burnt together with the reſt; being himſelf alſo left

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[1] Quoniam ſi ultra in iiſdem perſeveraverint, utar ea admonitione, qua me Dominus uti jubet. — Ep. IX. p. 22.

[2] Epiſt. LXIX. p 118. Memini enim quid mihi oſtenſum ſit, &c

[3] Hic etiam (*Cyprianus*) utitur oſtenſionibus & viſionibus; telo, ad conterendos adverſarios, in manu præſertim *Cypriani*, viri optimi atque divini, valentiſſimo; alias vano ac futili. Nam & callidus Rhetor & Sophiſta vafer hujuſmodi viſa ad cauſam ſuam appoſitiſſima, poterit comminiſci, & fallere incautos & ſimplices. Rigalt. Not ibid.

“for dead, half burnt, and buried in ſtones, till “he was found ſcarce alive, and carried off by “the piety of his daughter, and ſo reſtored to “the world againſt his will. But the Lord had “now ſignified the cauſe of it; that he might “add him to the Prieſthood of his Church [1].” In another letter he recommends to them one *Celerinus*, whom he had ordained a lecturer: *whoſe modeſty*, he ſays, *had been over-ruled and compelled by a divine viſion, to accept that office* [2]. Where *Rigaltius* once more reflects, *on the great diligence of* Cyprian, *in making ſuch uſe of viſions* [3]. But *Cyprian* himſelf ſuggeſts the reaſon of it, in the Epiſtle immediately preceding, addreſſed likewiſe to the Clergy and the people, concerning one *Aurelius*, whom he had ordained a lecturer, by a *divine admonition*, without calling them together and conſulting with them in common, concerning the character and merit of the Candidate, as it was the cuſtom of thoſe days in all *Clerical ordinations*; for which he excuſes himſelf by ſaying, that there was no occaſion, in the preſent caſe, *to wait for human teſtimonies, when the divine ſuffrage had already been ſignified* [1]. This then ſeems to be the meaning of *Cyprian's diligence in the uſe of viſions*, that whenever he thought fit to exert his Epiſcopal authority, *without the previous conſent of his Clergy and people*, he might obviate their murmurs, by alledging a divine command for it.

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[1] Nam admonitos nos & inſtructus ſciatis dignatione divina ut *Numidicus* Preſbyter aſcribatur— qui hortatu ſuo copioſum Martyrum numerum, lapidibus & flammis necatum ante ſe miſit: quique uxorem adhærentem lateri ſuo, concrematam ſimul cum cæteris—lætus aſpexit. Ipſe ſemiuſtulatus & lapidibus obrutus, & pro mortuo derelictus,—remanſit invitus, ſed remanendi, ut videmus, hæc fuit cauſa, ut eum Clero noſtro Dominus adjungeret. Ep. xxxv.

[2] Referimus ad vos *Celerinum.*—Clero noſtro non humana ſuffragatione ſed divina dignatione conjunctum, &c. Ep. xxxiv.

[3] Notanda hic etiam eſt induſtria *Cypriani*, viſionum efficacia tam ſuaviter utentis. Not. b. ibid.

But the moſt memorable effect of any of his viſions was his flight and retreat, when he withdrew himſelf from his Church, in the time of perſecution. A ſtep which gave great ſcandal, and ſeems to have been conſidered by the Clergy of *Rome*, in a public letter written upon the ſubject of it, to the Clergy of *Carthage*, as a deſertion of his poſt and paſtoral duty [2]. So that it is no wonder to find *Cyprian* himſelf, as well as his Apologiſt *Pontius*, the writer of his Life, ſo ſolicitous to excuſe it. "There is no doubt, " ſays *Rigaltius*, but that the ſeverity of his ma" ſter *Tertullian*, who wrote a book againſt all " flight in time of perſecution, raiſed ſuch ſcru" ples and ſhame in the mind of *Cyprian*, as " made him labour hard to wipe off that diſ" grace; as the pains and perplexity of his Ad-

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[1] In ordinationibus Clericis, Fratres cariſſimi, ſolemus vos ante conſulere, & mores ac merita ſingulorum communi conſilio ponderare, ſed expectanda non ſunt teſtimonia humana, cum præcedunt divina ſuffragia, &c. Ep. xxxiii.

[2] Vid. Cyprian. Epiſt. ii.

“ vocate *Pontius* likewiſe ſhew [1].” They both of them therefore affirm, “ That he was commanded to retire, *by a ſpecial revelation from Heaven:* and that his flight was not the effect of any other fear, but that of offending God: and that his mind, wholly devoted and ſubſervient to the admonitions of God, was perſuaded, that if he had not obeyed the Lord, when he commanded him to retreat, he ſhould ſin even by ſuffering martyrdom [2].” Yet this plea was nothing elſe, without doubt, but a mere fiction, contrived for the purpoſe of quieting the ſcandal that was raiſed by his flight, and is in effect confuted by himſelf in another letter to the Clergy, in which he declares, “ That it was the advice and authority of one *Tertullus*, which prevailed with him to withdraw himſelf from a place, where his life was ſo much

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[1] Seceſſus iſte Cypriani fugæ probro minime caruit, —nec dubito quin ipſa tanti Magiſtri ſeveritas diſcipuli mentem adeo ſuffuderit, vel aliquo ſaltem ſcrupulo ſic pupugerit, ut fugæ ſuſpicionem Cyprianus abs ſe amoliri magno ſtudio contenderet. Hoc & Pontii familiaris ſui ſatis intricata ſedulitas oſtendit, ipſiuſque Cypriani Epiſtolæ ſequentes declarant. Et ſi verum amamus, haud aliud magis [illegible]a Romani Cleri tam argumentoſa quam incondita commonitio proſcribit. Rigalt. ibid. Not. b.

[2] Et audietis omnia quando ad vos reducem me Dominus fecerit, qui, *ut ſecederem*, juſſit. Epiſt. ix. p. 22.

Fuit vero formido illa, ſed juſta; formido, quæ Dominum timeret offendere. Formido, quæ præceptis Dei mallet obſequi, quam ſic coronari. Dicata enim in omnibus Deo mens, & fides divinis admonitionibus mancipata, credidit ſe, niſi Domino latebram tunc jubenti paruiſſet, etiam ipſa paſſione peccare. Cypr. Vit. per Pontium, p. 13.

"ſought for: wherefore he deſires them to perform all the functions of his office for him during his retreat, ſince their perſons were not expoſed to ſo much envy and danger as his would be [1]."

Dionyſius, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, who lived in the ſame age, has left the ſame ſtory likewiſe concerning himſelf, and ſwears to the truth of it: that in the time of a perſecution, he was commanded by God, in a viſion, to retire from *Alexandria*, and was wonderfully preſerved and guarded by him in his retreat [2]. *And ſhall we not believe a moſt holy Biſhop*, ſays Mr. *Dodwell*, *even upon his oath* [3]? The ſame *Dionyſius* affirms likewiſe, that he had another viſion upon the ſubject of *reading Heretical books*, about which he had ſome ſcruples, till a *voice from Heaven expreſly injoined him, to read them all without reſerve, becauſe he was able to examine and confute*

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[1] A *Tertullo*, fratre noſtro cariſſimo, ratio reddetur: qui pro cetera ſua cura, quam impendens divinis operibus impertit, etiam hujus conſilii auctor fuit, ut cautus & moderatus exiſterem, nec me in conſpectum publicum, & maxime ejus loci, ubi toties flagitatus & quæſitus fuiſſem, temere committerem. Fretus ergo & dilectione & religione veſtra, his litteris & hortor & mando, ut vos quorum minime illic invidioſa & non adeo periculoſa præſentia eſt, vice mea fungamini, &c. Ep.v. p. 13.

[2] Ἐγὼ δὲ ϗ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ λαλῶ, ϗ αὐτὸς οἶδεν ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι, οὐδεμίαν ἐπ' ἐμαυτοῦ βαλλόμενος, οὐδ' ἀθεεὶ πεποίημαι τὴν φυγήν. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. vi. c. 40.

[3] Quid hic faciemus? Viro Sanctiſſimo ne jurato quidem credemus? Diſſert. Cyprian. iv. § 17.

them [1]. This reminds me of a viſion alſo which St. *Jerom* declares to have been given to himſelf, about a century after; *in which he was dragged to the Tribunal of Chriſt, and terribly threatened, and even ſcourged, for the grievous ſin of reading ſecular and prophane writers,* Cicero, Virgil, *and* Horace; *whom, for that reaſon, he reſolved never to take into his hands any more:* upon which *Ruffinus* rallies him with great ſpirit and ſmartneſs, for inventing and publiſhing ſo ſilly a lie [2]. And it muſt needs be thought ſtrange, that God ſhould injoin contrarieties to his Saints and Servants; ſhould command one *Father* to read *Heretical books,* becauſe he was able to confute them, yet forbid it afterwards to another, who was full as able, to confute them, as his Predeceſſor. But if *Jerom's* viſion deſerved to be treated by his contemporaries as a fiction, I ſee no reaſon, either from the nature of the thing, or the uſe which is made of it, or the characters of the perſons concerned, why *the viſions of* Cyprian *and* Dionyſius, ſhould not merit the ſame treatment.

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[1] Ὅραμα θεόπεμπτον ἐπέῤῥωσέ με, ϗ λόγος πρός με γενόμενος, προσέταξε διαῤῥήδην λέγων, πᾶσιν ἐντύγχανε οἷς ἂν εἰς χεῖρας λάβοις· διευθύνειν γὰρ ἕκαστα ϗ δοκιμάζειν ἱκανὸς εἶ. Euſeb. Hiſt. vii. 7.

[2] Oſtendam apud ipſum (*Hieronymum*) tam licita haberi perjuria, ut in ſcriptis quoque ſuis deprehendi ea non erubeſcat. — Et cetera cum dixiſſet ejuſmodi, quibus alienam eſſe a Chriſtiano aſſereret librorum ſæcularium lectionem, inferit etiam revelationem quandam ad ſe divinitus factum, &c. Rufin. adv. Hieron. Vid. Oper. Hieron. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 414. Edit. Benedict.

But how credible ſoever theſe viſions might appear to the generality of Chriſtians in thoſe days, yet there were many at the ſame time, as *Cyprian* himſelf confeſſes, who contemned and made a jeſt of them all, as mere illuſions and impertinent fancies: but they were a ſort of men, he ſays, *who would ſooner believe any thing againſt a Prieſt, than believe a Prieſt* [1].

In one of the Dialogues, commonly aſcribed to *Lucian*, the Chriſtians ſeem to be ridiculed, on the account of their *faſting and watching whole nights in hymns and prayers, as if they could infuſe by that means, what ſort of dreams or viſions they thought fit* [2]. Now there is a paſſage ſo applicable to this remark, in the ancient narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Ignatius*, as to make us almoſt imagine, that the author had alluded to it. The narrative was drawn up by perſons who had accompanied the Martyr from *Aſia* to *Rome*, whoſe thoughts, for ſeveral months paſt, had been employed on nothing elſe but the ſubject of his Martyrdom, and it concludes thus: "Theſe things were done on the 13th of the "kalends of *January*; *Sura* and *Synecius* being "the ſecond time Conſuls of *Rome*; of which "we ourſelves are eye-witneſſes. And the night

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[1] Quanquam ſciam ſomnia ridicula, & viſiones ineptas quibuſdam videri; ſed utique illis, qui malunt contra ſacerdotes credere, quam ſacerdoti. Ep. lxviii. p. 118.

[2] Ἔλεγον γὰρ εἰλίους δέκα ἄσιτοι διαμενοῦμεν, καὶ ἐπὶ πανύχους ὑμνῳδίας παγρυπνοῦντες, ὀνειρώττομεν τὰ τοιαῦτα.—Philopatris, verſ. fin.

" following, as we were watching with tears in " the houſe, and praying to God with bended " knees, that he would impart to us weak men, " ſome aſſurance of what was done [with regard " to the Martyr] it happened, that falling into " a ſlumber, ſome of us, on a ſudden, ſaw the " bleſſed *Ignatius* ſtanding before us and em- " bracing us; others beheld the bleſſed Martyr " praying for us; others, as it were dropping " with ſweat, as if juſt come from his great la- " bor, and ſtanding by the Lord; which when " we ſaw, being filled with joy, and comparing " the viſions of our dreams with each other, we " glorified God the giver of all good, and being " aſſured of the bleſſedneſs of the Saint, we have " made known unto you, both the day and the " time, that being aſſembled together, accord- " ing to the time of his Martyrdom, we may " communicate with the combatant and moſt " valiant Martyr of Chriſt [1]."

But to declare freely what I think: whatever ground there might be in thoſe primitive ages, either to reject or to allow the authority of thoſe viſions, yet from all the accounts of them, that remain to us in theſe days, there ſeems to be the greateſt reaſon to ſuſpect, that they were all contrived, or authorized at leaſt, by the leading men of the Church, for the ſake of moderating and governing with more eaſe, the unruly ſpirit of the populace, in thoſe times of danger and difficulty. For they are generally applied, to excuſe the conduct of particular perſons, in ſome inſtances of it liable to cenſure; or to enforce ſome particular doctrine or diſcipline, warmly preſſed by ſome, and not well reliſhed by others, or to confirm things not onely trifling and frivolous, but ſometimes even ſuperſtitious, and hurtful to true religion.

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[1] Vid. Coteler. Patr. Apoſtol. Vol. ii. Martyr. S. Ignat. § VII. p. 161. See alſo Archbiſhop *Wake's* Tranſlation.

I have already obſerved, that it was the Heretic *Montanus*, who firſt gave a vogue to *prophetic viſions and ecſtaſies*, in the primitive Church. But when his pretenſions came afterwards to be ſuſpected and decried, it is remarkable, that thoſe who undertook to expoſe and confute them, employed ſuch arguments againſt his prophecy, as ſeemed to ſhake the credit of all prophecy. For whereas the *Montaniſts* delivered their prophecies always in *ecſtaſy*, or with loſs of ſenſes; it was then urged againſt them, "that this was the proof of a Diabolical ſpirit; "that the true Prophets never had ſuch fits; "never loſt their ſenſes; but calmly and ſedately received and underſtood whatever was revealed to them." And *Epiphanius* makes this the very criterion, or diſtinguiſhing character between a true and falſe prophet; *that the true had no ecſtaſies, conſtantly retained his ſenſes, and, with firmneſs of mind, apprehended and uttered the divine oracles* [1]. St. *Jerom* alſo declares, *that*

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[1] Ὅτε γὰρ ἦν χρεία, ἐν προφήταις, ἐν ἀληθινῷ πνεύματι, καὶ ἐῤῥωμένῃ διανοίᾳ καὶ παρακολουθοῦντι νῷ, οἱ αὐτῷ ἅγιοι τὰ πάντα προεφήτευσαν, &c. Adv. Hæreſ. l ii. T. i § III. p. 404.

the true Prophets never ſpake in ecſtaſy, or madneſs of heart, like Montanus *and his mad women*, Priſca, *and* Maximilla, *but underſtood what they delivered, and could ſpeak or hold their tongues, whenever they pleaſed, which thoſe, who ſpake in ecſtaſy, could not do* [1]. *Euſebius* alſo mentions a book of one *Miltiades*, written againſt *Montanus*, the purpoſe of which was, to prove, *that a Prophet ought not to ſpeak in ecſtaſy* [2]. Yet from the teſtimonies collected above, we have ſeen, that before the *Montaniſts* had brought thoſe *ecſtaſies* into diſgrace, the prophecy of the orthodox, as well as that of the Heretics, was declared to have been exerted in *ecſtaſy*. And it appears to have been the current opinion in thoſe earlier days, that the Prophets alſo of the Old Teſtament received and uttered their revelations in *ecſtaſy*.

Athenagoras expreſly affirms it, and ſays, “ that while they were under the divine impulſe, “ they were tranſported out of their ſenſes, and “ delivered in ecſtaſy what was inſpired, being “ mere organs of the Holy Spirit, juſt as a pipe “ or flute is of him who blows into it [3].”

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[1] Non enim loquitur (Propheta) in ἐκστάσει, extaſi, ut *Montanus* & *Priſca Maximillaque* delirant, ſed quod prophetat, liber eſt viſionis intelligentis univerſa quæ loquitur. Hier. Op. Vol. iii. p. 1559. Prolog. in Naum. Proph.

Qui autem in extaſi, id eſt, invitus loquitur, nec tacere nec loqui in ſua poteſtate habet. Ibid. Prolog. in Abacuc. p. 1591.

[2] Ἐν ᾧ ἀποδείκνυσι περὶ τοῦ μὴ δεῖν προφήτην ἐν ἐκστάσει λαλεῖν. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. v. c. 17.

[3] Οἳ κατ' ἔκστασιν τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς λογισμῶν, κινήσαντος αὐτοὺς τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, ἃ ἐνηρ-

Juſtin Martyr ſpeaks of them in the ſame ſtrain, "that the ſpirit of God deſcending from above, "made uſe of them, as of an inſtrument, juſt "as the quill ſtrikes the harp or lyre, to revele "to us the knowledge of divine and heavenly "things [1]." *Tertullian* alſo declares, "that "he, who has the ſpirit within him, muſt neceſ"ſarily be deprived of his ſenſes, eſpecially "whenever he beholds the glory of God, or "when God ſpeaks by him, as being then over"ſhadowed by the divine power [2]."

Again, *Montanus's* Aſſociate *Maximilla* gave out, *that the gift of Prophecy was to ceaſe with her*, and no other Prophet to ariſe after her. In anſwer to which, the Orthodox aſſerted, *that the true ſpirit of prophecy could never fail or ceaſe in the Church, till the conſummation of all things* [3]. In which, as Mr. *Dodwell* owns, "the Ancients "argued raſhly, and were miſtaken in their no"tion of the perpetuity of prophecy: ſince *Eu"ſebius*, who made it his buſineſs to explore and

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γοῦντο ἐξεφώνησαν, ὡσεὶ ϗ αὐλητὴς αὐλὸν ἐμπνεῦσαι. Legat. pr. Chriſtian. p. 9. Edit. ad calcem Oper. Juſt.-Mart.

[1] Ἵν' αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον ἐξ οὐρανοῦ κατιὸν πλῆκτρον, ὥσπερ ὀργάνῳ κιθάρας τινὸς ἢ λύρας τοῖς δικαίοις ἀνδράσι χρώμενον, τὴν τῶν θείων ἡμῖν ϗ οὐρανίων ἀποκαλύψῃ γνῶσιν. Cohort. ad gent. p. 9. B.

[2] In ſpiritu enim homo conſtitutus, præſertim quum gloriam Dei conſpicit, vel per ipſum Deus loquitur, neceſſe eſt, excidat ſenſu.——Adv. Marcion. l. iv. p. 537.

[3] Φάσκει γὰρ ἡ παρ' αὐτοῖς λεγομένη Μαξιμίλλα ἡ προφῆτις—μετ' ἐμὲ προφῆτις οὐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλεια, &c. Epiphan. Hæreſ. 48. § 2. Δεῖν γὰρ εἶναι τὸ προφήτικον χάρισμα ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ μέχρι τῆς τελείας παρουσίας, ὁ Ἀπόστολος ἀξιοῖ. Euſeb. Hiſt. v. 17.

“ deduce the ſucceſſion of thoſe prophetic gifts, “ intimates, that they were ceaſed and vaniſhed “ in his days [1]:” that is, about the middle of the fourth century.

Since we are now conſidering the miracles of the *Cyprianic* age, I cannot forbear taking notice of two or three of thoſe wonderful ſtories, which *Cyprian* himſelf atteſts, in that *magnificent treatiſe*, as it was called, concerning *the lapſed* Chriſtians, who, in the time of perſecution, had been induced, by the terrors of preſent death or tortures, to deny Chriſt, or offer incenſe to an Idol. “ There was a man, ſays he, who went up vo- “ luntarily to the Capitol, to deny the Lord; “ and when he had denied him, was preſently “ ſtruck dumb.—A woman alſo, who, after her “ lapſe, had the impudence to go to the baths, “ was there ſeized by an unclean ſpirit, and “ thrown to the ground, and with her teeth tore “ that tongue, with which ſhe had been either “ talking or feeding impiouſly; and ſo became “ her own executioner; for ſhe died not long after “ in great anguiſh and torments of her bowels.” He introduces the next ſtory more ſolemnly, by declaring, that he himſelf was preſent and an eye-witneſs of it. “ Certain Parents, ſays he,

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[1] Scio equidem lubenſque concedo, in tota hac *de prophetiarum perpetuitate*, hallucinatos eſſe veteres. Diſſert. Cypr. IV § 13.

Euſebius, qui hoc in ſua hiſtoria notatu dignum duxerit, quouſque *donorum prophetiarum* ſucceſſio permanavit, id ſane innuit, ſuo jam tempore illam defeciſſe. Ibid. § 22.

“ to

" too ſolicitous for their own ſafety, and flying " from perſecution, left an infant daughter to " the care of a nurſe, who carried it preſently to " the Magiſtrates. Theſe, being then aſſembled " with the people before an Idol, and ſeeing the " child not yet old enough to eat fleſh, gave it a " piece of bread dipt in wine, being the remains " of what had been offered to the Idol. The " mother, ignorant of the fact, within a ſhort " time after took her daughter home again; " but the child was yet no more able to diſco- " ver the crime committed, than ſhe was before " to underſtand or to hinder it. The mother " brought her therefore to us at the Sacrament, " while we knew nothing of the matter. But " the child being now mingled with the Saints, " and impatient of the ſervice and prayers, be- " gan to be ſeized, ſometimes with fits of cry- " ing, ſometimes with tortures of the mind, " and, as if it had been upon the rack, betray- " ed by all the ſigns which its tender age could " give, a ſenſe of guilt and conſciouſneſs of the " fact. The ſervice being ended, when the Dea- " con began to give the Cup to all preſent, and " it came to the child's turn, the little one, by " divine inſtinct, turned away its face, held its " lips cloſe ſhut, and refuſed the cup: the Dea- " con perſiſted, and poured a little down its " throat, though by force: upon this, convul- " ſions and vomitings enſued; the Euchariſt " could not ſtay in a body and mouth ſo de- " filed: the conſecrated potion of the Lord's

“ blood burſt out of its polluted bowels: ſo “ great is the power, ſo great the majeſty of “ the Lord: the ſecrets of darkneſs are detected “ by its light: nor could hidden crimes be “ concealed from the Prieſt of God: for this “ happened to an infant, which was not yet of “ age to ſpeak, or tell the crimes which others “ had committed upon it. There was another “ woman, ſays *Cyprian*, who, after ſhe had taken “ the Sacrament with us unobſerved, was “ inſtantly ſeized with pains and torments, and “ fell down convulſed and trembling, as if ſhe “ had ſwallowed a ſword or deadly poiſon: and “ her crime, which had eſcaped the notice of “ men, met with its puniſhment from God. “ Another, who had attempted with her polluted “ hands to open her cheſt (in which the “ conſecrated elements, according to the cuſtom “ of that age, were kept for her uſe at home) “ fire burſt out of it in ſuch a manner, that ſhe “ durſt not touch it. Another man, who had “ alſo been defiled, having had the aſſurance to “ take a part of the conſecrated bread, among “ the reſt, undiſcovered, could neither eat nor “ handle it, but, inſtead of it, found a coal of “ fire in his hands [1].”

Now what other notion can we reaſonably entertain of theſe ſtrange ſtories, but that they were partly forged, and partly aggravated and dreſſed up into this tragical form, from ſome accidental diſorders, which the ſenſe of a concealed guilt, and the dread of God's judgments upon it, would naturally raiſe in anxious minds, on that awful occaſion of receiving the Sacrament? For it is certain, that they were of the greateſt uſe in theſe times of danger and trial, to ſupport the diſcipline of the Church, which the *Lord guarded*, as Mr. *Dodwell* ſays, *by theſe terrors, as by the ſword of a Cherubin* [1]. Since none of thoſe, who had ſecretly lapſed, or been weak enough to deny the faith, and from a deſire of concealing their ſhame, had evaded the penance of the Church, durſt either come openly to the Sacrament, or take it even privately at home, or yet wholly abſtain from it, when the divine judgements were ſo ſignally exerted upon all, who had ventured on any of thoſe expedients, before they had made a public ſatisfaction for their crime, and been abſolved of it in form by the Paſtors of the Church. And it was without doubt for this end, that all theſe ſtories, with many more of the ſame kind, were ſo pompouſly and rhetorically ſet forth by this eminent Biſhop, in his celebrated treatiſe concerning the *lapſed* Chriſtians.

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[1] Vid. Cyprian. de Lapſis, Edit. Nic. Rigalt. p. 175.

§ 5. As to the gift of *expounding the Scriptures, or the myſteries of God*, by a divine inſpiration, which is claimed likewiſe by the Primitive Fathers, there is not the leaſt trace of it to be found in any age of the Church, from the days of the Apoſtles. For in the ſecond and third Centuries, the very period in which all the other miraculous gifts are ſuppoſed to have floriſhed in their greateſt vigor, it is certain, as we have ſeen above, that a moſt ſenſeleſs, extravagant, and enthuſiaſtic method of expounding prevailed, which has ever ſince been utterly ſlighted and rejected: whereas in theſe later days, when all extraordinary gifts are confeſſedly ceaſed, a clear, ſolid, and rational way of interpreting generally obtains, as the warmeſt advocates of Antiquity are forced to allow. And whenever any particular Father happens to be cenſured for his ridiculous comments on ſacred Writ, his Apologiſts with one voice alledge, that ſuch expoſitions are not to be charged to the man, *but to the age in which he lived*, which could not reliſh or indure any better.

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[1] Ita munivit Eccleſiæ ſuæ Dominus, quaſi gladio quodam Cherubico, ſanctam undequaque diſciplinam. Diſſ. Iren. ii. § 54.

JuſtinMartyr, however, lays claim to this gift, as *conferred upon him by the ſpecial grace of God* [1], upon which Mr. *Tillemont* declares, "that of "all the extraordinary graces, which the Holy "Spirit beſtowed upon the Church in thoſe "times, there were few ſo conſiderable, as that "of underſtanding the Scriptures, which was "communicated by ſingular favor to *Juſtin*[2]." Yet from all the writings and monuments of the very earlieſt Fathers, which remain to us, it is manifeſt, beyond all contradiction, that there never was any ſuch gift in the Church, after the times of the Apoſtles; and that *Juſtin* in particular, had no better claim to it than any of the reſt. And if thoſe Fathers then, through a fervency of zeal, or an enthuſiaſtic turn of mind, could miſtake ſuch fanciful expoſitions for divine inſpirations, I ſee no reaſon, why they might not as eaſily be deluded in every other inſtance of thoſe pretended gifts, which flattered the ſame zeal and ſpirit that ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed them.

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[1] Ἀπεκάλυψεν οὖν ἡμῖν πάντα ὅσα καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ νενοήκαμεν. Juſt. Dial. par. ii. p. 352. Edit. Thirlb. it. p. 258, 391.

[2] Memoirs, Tom. ii. p. 358, 380.

It is a common caſe with men of great piety, zealouſly perſuaded of the truth and high importance of any religious doctrine, to think it reaſonable, that God ſhould interpoſe himſelf miraculouſly in favor of it, when it happens to be oppoſed by any earthly power, and in danger of being oppreſſed: and when they are thus prepared by their prejudices, to expect a divine interpoſition, they liſten to every pretenſion of that ſort, which craft or wild enthuſiaſm can deviſe, without allowing their reaſon to examine it, or to ſuggeſt the ſuſpicion of a fraud. There are many inſtances of this in Hiſtory, and a remarkable one in our own; that of *the Holy Maid of Kent*, in the reign of *Henry the VIIIth:* who, by the pretence of *viſions and divine revelations*, communicated in *trances or ecſtaſy*, contrived by Popiſh Prieſts, to raiſe the ſinking credit of their cauſe, drew in Biſhop *Fiſher*, with many other eminent perſons, to take her for a *Propheteſs*, divinely inſpired, as *Tertullian* did his *ecſtatic Maid.* Yet this modern Prelate was more learned and judicious, than any one perhaps of all the ancient Fathers, and by all accounts of him, as pious and religious too: ſince he loſt his life, or, in the ſtyle of the *Romiſh* Church, ſuffered martyrdom, for the ſake of thoſe very prejudices which betrayed him into this folly. But the Lord *Cromwell*, expoſtulating with him on that ſubject, rightly told him, "that the true "reaſon which induced him to give credit to "the maid, was the matter of her prophecies: to "which he was ſo addicted, that nothing could "come amiſs which ſerved to that end; and he "appealed to his conſcience, whether, if ſhe "had propheſied in favor of the King's pro"ceedings, he would have given ſuch eaſy cre"dit to her, and not have examined the matter "farther [1]."

§ 6. The *gift of tongues* alſo is claimed, as we have ſeen, among the reſt, and affirmed to have been actually poſſeſſed by the primitive Chriſtians: for if the teſtimony of *Irenæus* can be credited, many were indued with it in his days, and heard *to ſpeak all kinds of languages in the Church.* And in truth, this gift, in the common eſtimation of human reaſon, has been thought ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, in thoſe firſt ages, that the Advocates of the primitive miracles, truſting to that hypotheſis, inſtead of ſearching into the fact, urge the neceſſity of its continuance after the days of the Apoſtles, as a proof of the continuance of all the reſt. Yet how great ſoever the importance of it may ſeem to be, it is evident, as I have elſewhere ſhewn, from the origin, nature, and exercife of it, as they are repreſented in the New Teſtament, that it was not permanent or laſting, either in the Church at large, or in thoſe particular perſons who were principally favored with it, but was granted onely on certain ſpecial occaſions, and then again withdrawn, even from the Apoſtles themſelves; ſo that, in the ordinary courſe of their miniſtry, they appear to have been generally deſtitute of it.

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[1] See Bp. Burnet's Hiſt. Reform. Vol. i. p. 154.

Irenæus however declares it to have been indulged to many in his days. But it is very remarkable, that this Primitive Biſhop, who aſcribes it ſo liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himſelf, for the propagation of the Goſpel in his own *Dioceſe*, among the *Celtæ*, or *Gauls*; where, as Dr. *Cave* interprets his words, *it was not the leaſt part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country; a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1]. Nor is it leſs ſtrange alſo, that from the time of *Irenæus*, there is not a ſingle Father, in all the ſucceeding ages, who, upon his authority, has ventured to carry on the ſame pretenſion, or make the leaſt claim to it; or to ſpeak of it in any other manner, than as a gift peculiar to the firſt Chriſtians, in the times of the Apoſtles. And I might riſk the merit of my argument on this ſingle point; that, after the Apoſtolic times, there is not in all hiſtory one inſtance, (either well atteſted, or even ſo much as mentioned,) of any particular perſon, who had ever exerciſed this gift, or pretended to exerciſe it, in any age or country whatſoever. Mr. *Dodwell* ſuppoſes it to have ceaſed, in the reign of *M. Aurelius*, about ſixty years after the death of St. *John* [1]. But it is not credible, that a gift of ſuch eminent uſe ſhould intirely ceaſe, while all the reſt were ſubſiſting in full vigor, and abounding every day more and more. If, according to the common hypotheſis, we admit them all to be true, it is not poſſible, I ſay, to imagine any cauſe, why this in particular ſhould be withdrawn, and the reſt continued: but if, agreeably to my ſyſtem, we conſider them all as fictitious, we then ſee an obvious and manifeſt reaſon for it. For all the other extraordinary gifts, *of healing diſeaſes, caſting out Devils, viſions, and ecſtatic revelations*, afford great room to Impoſtors, to exert all their craft of ſurprizing and dazzling the ſenſes of the ſimple, the credulous, and the ſuperſtitious, of all ranks: whereas the *gift of tongues* cannot eaſily be counterfeited, or a pretenſion to it impoſed on men of ſenſe, or on any indeed, but thoſe who are utterly illiterate, and ſtrangers to all tongues but their own: and to acquire a number of languages by natural means, and to a degree, that might make them paſs for a ſupernatural gift, was a work of ſo much difficulty and labor, as rendered it impracticable to ſupport a pretenſion of that kind, for a ſucceſſion of many years. And this, in all probability, was the real cauſe of it's being dropped ſo early in thoſe primitive ages: for after the mention of it by *Irenæus*, we find it no longer in any ſubſequent liſt of the miraculous gifts, nor the leaſt hint of its continuance in the Church, in any later writer, from that time down to the preſent. If this then appears to have been the caſe of this particular gift; that a falſe claim to it was made by the early Fathers, and held up for a while, till it could no longer be ſupported; it is ſufficient, one would think, of itſelf, to blaſt the general credit of all the reſt, though no particular mark of fraud could have been fixed on each of them ſeparately: but when there is not a ſingle one among them all, which, either from its nature or end, or manner of exertion, or the character of its witneſſes, does not furniſh juſt ground to ſuſpect it as fictitious, it muſt needs perſuade every rational inquirer, that they were all derived from the ſame ſource of craft and impoſture.

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[1] See Cave's Lives of Saints, Vol. i. p. 169. § ix.

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[1] A Marci temporibus deficere cœperunt gratiæ illæ extraordinariæ—defecere eorundem dona linguarum. Diſſ. in Iren. ii. § 44.

In ſhort; if we trace the hiſtory of this gift from its origin, we ſhall find, that, in the times of the Goſpel, in which alone the miracles of the Church are allowed to be true by all Chriſtians, it was the firſt gift which was conferred upon the Apoſtles, in a public and illuſtrious manner, and reckoned ever after among the principal of thoſe, which were imparted to the firſt converts. But in the ſucceeding ages, when miracles began to be of a ſuſpected and dubious character, it is obſervable, that this gift is mentioned but once by a ſingle writer, and then vaniſhed of a ſudden, without the leaſt notice, or hint, given by any of the ancients, either of the manner, or time, or cauſe of its vaniſhing. Laſtly, in the later ages, when the miracles of the Church were not onely ſuſpected, but found to be falſe by our Reformers, and conſidered as ſuch ever ſince by all Proteſtants, this gift has never once been heard of, or pretended to by the Romaniſts themſelves, though they challenge at the ſame time all the other gifts of the Apoſtolic days. From all which, I think, we may reaſonably infer, that the *gift of tongues*, may be conſidered as a proper teſt and criterion, for determining the miraculous pretenſions of all Churches, which derive their deſcent from the Apoſtles: and conſequently, if, in the liſt of their extraordinary gifts, they cannot ſhew us this, we may fairly conclude, that they have none elſe to ſhew, which are real and genuin.

I have now run through all the various kinds of the miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have ſubſiſted in the Church, during the ſecond and third centuries; and have opened the genuin ſtate of them, as far as it is diſcoverable to us at this diſtance, from the moſt authentic monuments and teſtimonies of the principal Fathers of thoſe centuries. Ages, which are always ſtyled the pureſt, and in which theſe very Fathers bore the firſt character, not onely on the account of their piety and integrity, but of their abilities alſo and learning. If any ſuſpicions then can be entertained againſt ſuch witneſſes, they will be ſtronger ſtill againſt all who ſucceeded them, eſpecially after the Empire became Chriſtian, when, according to the hypotheſis of the very Admirers of theſe primitive ages, a general corruption both of faith and morals began more openly to infect the Chriſtian Church: which by that revolution, as St. *Jerom* ſays, *loſt as much of her virtue, as it had gained of power and wealth* [1].

But in the caſe of theſe miracles, there is one circumſtance common to all the writers who atteſt them, as well in the earlier as the later ages; that though their aſſertions be ſtrong, their inſtances are weak; and when, in proof of what they affirm, they deſcend to alledge any particular facts, they are uſually ſo unlucky in the choice of them, that inſtead of ſtrengthening, they weaken the credit of their general affirmation, and, from the abſurdity of each miracle related by them, furniſh a freſh objection to their power of working any. This the reader can hardly fail to obſerve, from the examples already produced; to which I ſhall add one or two more of the moſt conſiderable, which are tranſmitted to us from the ſame ages, and which I had before omitted to recite.

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[1] Et poſtquam ad Chriſtianos principes venerit, potentia quidem & divitiis major, ſed virtutibus minor eſt. Oper. Tom. ii. par. ii. p. 91.

One of the moſt authentic and celebrated pieces in all primitive antiquity, is *the circular letter of the Church of Smyrna*, containing a narrative of the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, their Biſhop, and *of the many miracles*, as Mr. *Dodwell* ſays, *which made it illuſtrious* [1]. This letter, written about the middle of the ſecond century, informs us, “ That when that Saint was entering the liſts, in which he was to be burnt, “ there was ſo great a tumult, that nobody “ could be heard.—But there came a voice to “ him from Heaven, ſaying, *Be ſtrong*, Polycarp, *and acquit thyſelf like a man*: and though “ no body ſaw who it was that ſpake, yet many “ of the brethren heard the voice [2].—As ſoon “ as he had finiſhed his prayer, the executioner

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[1] Inter præcipua ſacræ antiquitatis monumenta, quæ ex primis Eccleſiæ temporibus, ad noſtram ætatem pervenerunt, jure merito computatur illa egregia epiſtola, quam de beati Polycarpi martyrio Eccleſia Smyrnenſis conſcripſit. Ruinart. Act. Martyr. p. 28.

Quanta autem miracula hoc Martyrium inſignierint, teſtes habemus ipſos illos Polycarpi Smyrnæos. Dodw. Diſſ. Iren. II. § XXXII.

[2] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 8, 9. Apud Coteler. Patres Apoſt. T. ii. p. 198.

" kindled the fire, and the flame began to blaze " to a great heighth: when behold, ſays the " writer, a mighty wonder appeared to us, whoſe " lot it was to ſee it, and who were reſerved by " Heaven to declare to others what we had " ſeen. For the flame, forming a kind of arch, " like to the ſail of a ſhip filled with the wind, " encompaſſed the body of the martyr, as in a " circle; who ſtood in the midſt of it, not as " fleſh which is burnt, but bread which is bak- " ed, or as gold and ſilver glowing in a furnace: " and ſo ſweet a ſmell iſſued from him all the " while, as if it had been the ſmoke of frankin- " cenſe or ſome rich ſpices. At length, when " theſe wicked men ſaw, that his body could " not be conſumed by fire, they commanded the " executioner to draw near, and to thruſt his " ſword into him; which being done accord- " ingly, there came out of his body *a Dove*, " and ſo great a quantity of blood, as quite ex- " tinguiſhed the fire: ſo that the whole multi- " tude were amazed, to ſee ſo great a difference " between the Unbelievers and the Elect [1]." Yet it appears from the ſequel of the narrative, that there was fire enough ſtill left, to conſume the body to aſhes, which was executed with great care, that the Chriſtians might not be able to preſerve the leaſt remains of it.

The greateſt part of this Epiſtle is tranſcribed by *Euſebius*, who has omitted the mention of *the Dove* which flew out of his body; for which reaſon Mr. *Dodwell* and Archbiſhop *Wake* have thought fit alſo to omit it. Yet all the oldeſt copies ſtill extant, from which Archbiſhop *Uſher*, *Cotelerius*, and *Ruinart*, publiſhed their ſeveral editions, retain this paſſage [1]: which *Euſebius* might probably drop for the ſame reaſon, for which Mr. *Dodwell* and Biſhop *Wake* alſo profeſs to have dropt it; viz. for the ſake of rendering the narrative *the leſs ſuſpected* [z]."

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[1] Vid. Martyr. Polyc. c. 15, 16.

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[1] Præ aliis latinis verſionibus, id habet Uſſeriana, quod omnium omnino aliarum longe antiquiſſima ſit, utpote quæ non multo poſt Euſebii tempora facta fuerit: quamque exiſtimat Uſſerius ipſam eandem fuiſſe, quæ olim in Eccleſia Gallicana legebatur. Ruinart. ib. p. 28. Vid. it. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iv. c. 15.

[z] Nec enim illa urgemus, quæ de Columba habet Codex Uſſerianus, quæ nulla utique comparent in Euſebio aut Ruffino. Nec enim ſuppoſititiis, ſuſpectæve fidei monumentis immiſtis, verorum fidem cenſuimus derogandam. Dodw. Diſſ. Iren. II. XXXII.

N.B. Archbiſhop *Wake* explaning his reaſons for omitting the ſtory of *the Dove*, ſays, "Now though there "may ſeem to have been "ſomething of a foundation "for ſuch a miracle, in the "raillery of *Lucian*, upon the "death of *Peregrinus* the Philoſopher, who burnt him"ſelf about the ſame time "that *Polycarp* ſuffered, and "from whoſe *Funeral Pile he* "*makes a Vulture to aſcend*, in "oppoſition, it may be, to "*Polycarp*'s *Pigeon* (if indeed "he deſigned, as a learned "man has conjectured, un"der the ſtory of that Philo"ſopher, to ridicule the life "and ſufferings of *Polycarp*) "yet I confeſs, I am ſo little "a friend to *ſuch kind of Mi*"*racles*, that I thought it bet"ter with *Euſebius*, to omit "that circumſtance, than to "mention it from Bp. *Uſher*'s "Manuſcript," &c. [Prelim. Diſc. p. 57.] which Manuſcript, however, he afterwards declares, *to be ſo well atteſted, that we need not any farther aſſurance of the truth of it.* p. 59.

To the end of this letter is annexed the following advertiſement: "The Epiſtle was tranſcribed by *Caius*, from the copy of *Irenæus*, "the diſciple of *Polycarp*; and I, *Socrates*, tranſcribed it at *Corinth*. After which I, *Pionius*, "again wrote it out, from the copy abovementioned, having ſearched it out by the revelation of *Polycarp*, who directed me to it," &c.

Euſebius alſo relates a miracle, wrought by *Narciſſus* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, about the end of the ſecond, or the beginning of the third century: "That when the ſacred-oil was almoſt ſpent, "in the vigil of *Eaſter*, and the people were "in a great conſternation about it, he ordered "thoſe, who had the care of the lamps, to go "and draw water from a certain well in the "neighbourhood, and to bring it away to him: "which being accordingly done, *Narciſſus*, after "he had prayed over it, commanded them to "pour it into the lamps with a ſincere faith in "Chriſt, upon which, by a miraculous and divine power, the nature of the water was "changed into the fatneſs of oil: of which oil, "as *Euſebius* ſays, ſeveral ſmall quantities were

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Theſe deaths of the Primitive Martyrs ſeldom failed of being accompanied by miracles, which, as we find them related in the old Martyrologies, were generally copied from each other: concerning ſweet ſmells iſſuing from their bodies, and their wonderful reſiſtance of all kinds of torture; and the miraculous cures of their wounds and bruiſes, ſo as to tire their tormentors by the difficulty of deſtroying them, which yet, after a vain Profuſion of miracles, was always effected at the laſt.

"preſerved by great numbers of the faithful, "to his time, which was about an hundred "years after the date of the miracle [1]."

The ſame hiſtorian, giving an account of the horrible barbarities, which were exerciſed upon the Chriſtians of *Palæſtine*, concludes one of his ſtories in the following manner; "after theſe "things had been tranſacted many days ſucceſ"ſively, this miracle appeared: there was a "clear and bright ſky, and a remarkable ſere"nity of the air: when on a ſudden, the pillars "in the porticos of the city poured out drops "of tears; and when there was not the leaſt "moiſture in the air, the ſtreets and public "places were all wet, nobody knew how, as if "water had been thrown upon them: ſo that "it became a common talk, that the earth wept "for the impiety which was committed; and to "reprove the relentleſs and ſavage nature of "men, ſtones, and inanimate bodies, ſhed tears "for what had happened [2]." A deſcription of this kind might eaſily be excuſed in an Orator or a Poet, but when an Hiſtorian, after he has raiſed our attention, and prepared us to expect ſomething great and miraculous, tells us onely, *of ſtones ſhedding tears for the impieties of*

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[1] Παρὰ δὲ πλείστοις τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐπὶ μήκιστον ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ εἰς ἡμᾶς βραχύ τι δεῖγμα τοῦ τότε θαύματος φυλαχθῆναι. Hiſt. Eccl. 6, 9.

[2] Ἐφ' οἷς πλείσταις ἡμέραις ἐπιτελουμένοις, τοιοῦτόν τι παράδοξον συμβαίνει. Ibid. c. IX. p. 425.

men, he debaſes the gravity of Hiſtory, and makes miracles themſelves contemptible.

Mr. *Dodwell*, as I have before ſaid, has, with great diligence, deduced the Hiſtory of the primitive miracles, down to theſe very times of *Euſebius*; which he then ſhuts up with the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by human laws, declaring, "That many things concurred to re-" commend the credit of the preceding ages, "which have no place in thoſe that follow-" ed [1]." And ſpeaking of the life of *Gregory*, called the *Wonder-worker*, written by *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, a Biſhop of the greateſt piety and gravity, he ſays, "In this Life there are many things "which breathe the air of impoſture and the "genius of the fourth century, ſo that I dare not "mix them with what is more genuin, for fear "of hurting the credit of all [2]." For this reaſon therefore, it was my firſt intention to confine my inquiries alſo to the ſame period; but having ſince perceived, that ſeveral of our learned Divines, and principal advocates of the Chriſtian faith, have not ſcrupled to aſſert the ſucceſſion of true miracles, to the end even of the fifth century, I thought it neceſſary to extend my argument to the ſame length, leſt I ſhould ſeem to neglect any evidence which could be offered to me, and eſpecially ſuch, as is declared to be *convincing* and *deciſive* by men of their character. But from every ſtep, that we advance forward, we ſhall readily perceive, that Mr. *Dodwell*, who had as much piety and more learning, than any of them, has in this reſpect ſhewn more judgement too, by reſtraining the miraculous powers of the Church to the three firſt centuries.

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[1] Multa enim faciunt ad primorum Seculorum commendandam fidem, quæ locum in ſequentium ſeculorum teſtimoniis prorſus nullum habent. Diſſert. Iren. ii. § 62.

[2] Fateor ibi multa legi, quarti, in quo vixit Gregorius, ſeculi, impoſtorumque genium referentia, &c. Ibid. § 55.

In the fourth century, we find ſome of the principal Fathers delivering themſelves on this ſubject ſo variouſly and inconſiſtently, as ſhews, that tho' they were aſhamed to deny, what they knew to be true, yet they were deſirous to inculcate, what they knew to be falſe. For on ſome occaſions, when they are preſſed, they plainly confeſs, that miracles were then ceaſed; yet on others, they appeal to them again as common, and performed among them every day. For example, St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, "that in "the infancy of the Church, the extraordinary "gifts of the Spirit were beſtowed even on the "unworthy, becauſe thoſe early times ſtood in "need of that help, for the more eaſy propaga"tion of the Goſpel; but now, ſays he, they "are not given even to the worthy, becauſe the "preſent ſtrength of the Chriſtian faith is no "longer in want of them [1]." In another place, ſpeaking of the miraculous powers of the Apoſtles, and of the force, which they had in converting the Gentile world, "wherefore, adds "he, becauſe no miracles are wrought now, we "are not to take it for a proof, that none were "wrought then; for then they were of uſe, but "now they are not: for the firſt planters of the "Goſpel were ſimple and ignorant men, and "had nothing to teach from themſelves; but "what they received from God, that they delivered to the world: ſo we likewiſe of theſe "times, bring nothing indeed of our own, but "what we received from them, that we declare "to all. — Nor do we yet perſuade by the force "of our reaſon, but evince the truth of our "doctrines from the holy Scriptures, and the "miracles then wrought in confirmation of "them [1]." Again, ſpeaking of the Jews, in our Saviour's time, who *deſired a ſign*, he ſays, "there are ſome alſo even now, who deſire and "aſk, Why are not miracles performed ſtill at "this day? and why are there no perſons, who "raiſe the dead and cure diſeaſes?" To which he replies, "that it was owing to the want of "faith, and virtue, and piety in thoſe times [2]." On another occaſion alſo he declares, "that St. "*Paul's* Handkerchiefs could once do greater "miracles, than all the Chriſtians of his days

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[1] Νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀξίοις δέδοται, ταύτης δεῖται τῆς συμμαχίας. ἡ γὰρ ἰσχὺς τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι Op. T. iii. p. 65. Edit. Bened.

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[1] Ibid. Op. T. x. p. 45, 46.

[2] Καὶ γὰρ ϗ νῦν εἰσιν οἱ ζητοῦντες ϗ λέγοντες, διατί μὴ ϗ νῦν σημεῖα γίνεται. &c. Ib. T. viii. p. 138. A. It. T. xi. p. 387, 388.

[3] Id de Sacerdot. l. iv. Op. T. i. p. 411. A.

“could do, with ten thouſand prayers and “tears [1].” Laſtly, in *his books of conſolation*, addreſſed to his friend *Stagirius*, who was ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed and horribly tormented by an evil ſpirit, it is expreſly ſignified, “that neither the tombs of the Martyrs, to which he “had often applied for relief, nor the repeated “endeavours of the moſt holy and celebrated “Exorciſts of thoſe days, were able to drive the “Devil out of him [2].

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[1] Id de Sacerdot. l. iv. Op. T. i. p. 411. A.

[2] Ad Stagir. lib. i. Op. T. i. p. 179. A.

N. B. St. *Chryſoſtom* is thought to have written theſe books to *Stagirius*, about A. D. 380. which Mr. *Whiſton* recommends, as very *curious, and well worth the peruſal of inquiſitive men*. [See Dæmoniacs, p. 60.] I have run them ſlightly over, and ſhall give the reader a ſhort abſtract, of what I chiefly collected from them, ſince it relates to my preſent ſubject, and helps ſtill to illuſtrate the true character and principles of this fourth age.

Stagirius was the Son and Heir of a noble family in *Antioch*, trained up in the Chriſtian Religion; who, in contradiction to the will, and earneſt remonſtrances of his Father, had taken a reſolution to enter into the Monaſtick life: for which purpoſe he ſeems to have withdrawn himſelf, in a ſecret manner, though with the privity of his Mother, into a certain Monaſtery, where he lay conceled from the purſuit and diſcovery of his Father. On his firſt entrance however, he did not eaſily reliſh the rough diſcipline of the cloyſter; but preſuming on the ſplendor of his birth, expected ſome exemption from the ſeverer parts of it; till being inured to it by degrees, and confirmed by the example and admonitions of the Elder Monks, he became equal to the moſt perfect of them in the frequency of his faſtings and watchings, and all the other arts of mortifying his body. But now the Devil reſolved, if poſſible, to ſhake

There are ſeveral other paſſages in this Father of the ſame ſtrain; in which he allows the

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his conſtancy, and attacked him with all that train of evils, which his power and malice could inflict: by which he reduced him at laſt to ſuch a ſtate of melancholy and deſpair, as made life itſelf inſupportable to him. In this condition he laid open his complaints to his friends, and particularly to St. *Chryſoſtom*, by whom they are ſeſeverally enumerated and ſummed up in the following manner.

Firſt, That in the former part of his life, while he lived like other men in the world, he never ſuffered any thing of this kind: but after he had crucified himſelf to the world, he preſently fell under the ſenſe of this diſorder, which was ſufficient to throw him into deſpair.

2dly, That many, who, from a luxurious life, had been afflicted in the ſame way, were yet relieved in a ſhort time, and reſtored to perfect health, ſo as to marry, and become the Fathers of many children, and enjoy all the other delights of the world, without ever relapſing into the ſame miſery: whereas he who had ſpent ſo much time in faſtings, and watchings, and the other auſterities of the Monkiſh diſcipline, could find no reſpite from his affliction.

3dly, That the holy man, who had ſhewn ſo much power in healing others in the ſame caſe, was not able to do him any ſervice; neither he himſelf, nor any of the reſt, who were with him, and more powerful even than he in theſe cures, but were all forced to go away with ſhame to themſelves.

4thly, That he was ſo oppreſſed on this account with grief and deſpair, as to be frequently tempted to hang, or drown, or throw himſelf from ſome precipice.

5thly, That his companions, who entered with him into the ſame ſort of life, continued to live at their eaſe and undiſturbed, while he had no peace or reſt, but was confined as it were to a priſon, of all others the ceſſation of miracles, and ſpeaks of them even with contempt, “ as proper onely to rouſe the

moſt wretched, ſince no fetters of iron were ſo grievous as the chain, with which he was bound.

6thly, That what chiefly diſturbed and made him tremble even with fear, was, leſt his Father ſhould come to the knowledge of his caſe, and do ſome great miſchief to thoſe holy men, who firſt received him; and truſting to his power and wealth, and hurried on by his paſſion, ſhould attempt all ſorts of violence againſt them. That his mother indeed had hitherto been able to concele the matter from him, and elude the effect of his inquiries; but if he ſhould happen to detect her diſſimulation, his reſentment would be intolerable both to her and to the Monks.

Laſtly, That the completion of his miſery was, to have no confidence or hope in what was to come, and not to know, whether he ſhould ever find any cure or eaſe, ſince his expectations had been ſo often fruſtrated, by relapſing ſtill into the ſame evil.

Now from this detail of his complaints, as they were repreſented by himſelf, what elſe can we collect, but that this noble Youth, diſguſted perhaps by ſome little domeſtic uneaſineſs, had been ſeduced by certain Monks, to bid adieu to the world and retire into a Convent? In which retreat, by reflecting at leiſure on the raſhneſs of his reſolution, and the provocation which he had given by it to an indulgent Parent, he ſeems to have been ſtung with remorſe: while the auſterities, which he now practiſed, and by which he hoped to calm his mind, and conciliate the favor of heaven, inſtead of appeaſing, ſerved onely to increaſe his anxiety, and reduced him by degrees to ſuch a weakneſs and dejection, both of body and mind, as brought on horrible Symptoms, and Epileptic fits, and made him completely miſerable. This naturally infuſed ſcruples and ſuſpicions, which he himſelf gently intimates, that he was in a wrong way, and owed all his ſufferings to his unhappy change of life; and that a return therefore to the

“ dull and ſluggiſh, but uſeleſs to men of philo-“ ſophical minds; that they were frequently li-

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world, where he had never felt any ſuch, would free him from them again, by affording him the comforts of matrimony, and children, and all the other ſweets of ſocial life.

That this was the real caſe and ſource of his complaints, is evident from his own account of them. Let us ſee then what ſort of comfort St. *Chryſoſtom* thought fit to adminiſter to him in this ſad ſtate. This holy Father had himſelf alſo, when young, taken the ſame reſolution of retiring from the world; in conſequence of which, after he had ſpent ſeveral years in a Monaſtery, he betook himſelf to the mountains, where he lived as an Hermit, in a ſolitary cave, for two years more: till perceiving at laſt, that the infirmity of his body could no longer indure the ſeverity of that diſcipline, he quitted his ſolitude, and choſe to reſide in *Antioch*, where he is ſuppoſed to have written this elaborate conſolation to *Stagirius*. But tho' he left the *Aſcetic life* himſelf, when he found it hurtful to his health, he never once ſuggeſts the ſame advice to his friend *Stagirius*, nor ever mentions the onely remedy, which could afford him any ſolid comfort; *viz.* to quit the place and way of life, which had given birth to all his troubles; and to reconcile himſelf to his Father, by returning to the world, and by the uſe of its innocent pleaſures, to calm the diſorders of his mind, and reſtore it to its former tranquillity.

This, I ſay, was the moſt rational and effectual comfort which could be adminiſtered to him; but inſtead of this, St. *Chryſoſtom* employs all his rhetoric to perſuade him, that his ſufferings were the ſure marks of the divine favor, and had been of the greateſt ſervice to him: that he could not but remember, on his firſt entrance into the Monaſtery, and before the Devil began to vex him, how difficult he found it, to comply with the rules of the ſociety; how haughty and ſluggiſh he was; how hard to be rouſed from his bed, and how angry with thoſe who diſturbed him: but from the time of this trial and ſtruggle with the Devil, all that difficulty was at an end, and no man

“ able to ſiniſter ſuſpicions, of being mere phan-
“ taſms and illuſions, and that it was a proof of

ſurpaſſed him in all thoſe auſterities and exerciſes of devotion, which conſtitute the perfection of the Chriſtian life. He exhorts him therefore to perſevere in his faſtings and watchings, and all his other mortifications, as the onely means of baffling all theſe efforts and terrors, by which the Devil was laboring to drive him from that bleſſed courſe. That while he was immerſed in the pleaſures of the world, or was yet a novice and raw in the Monaſtic life, God would not expoſe him to this trial, nor ſuffer the Devil to attack him; knowing, that he would then be an unequal match, and fall an eaſy prey to the Adverſary: but now that he was become firm and perfect in all his exerciſes, God committed him to the Stadium, as an expert champion, and ſure to come off with glory from the combat. That as to the trouble, which he ſuffered on the account of his Father, it was a weakneſs to afflict himſelf for what might or might not happen hereafter: that his Father, perhaps, would never come to the knowledge of his caſe; or, if he did, would be ſo much diſturbed at it, as he imagined: that a man of his temper, fond of vain expences, and jovial company, puffed with pride, and haughtineſs, and enſlaved to a Concubine, whom he kept in his houſe, would have but little concern for the diſtreſs of a Son. That he had ſhewn this already by experiments; for though he had once loved him with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and above all things in the world, yet all that love was extinguiſhed, upon his entrance into the monaſtery; which his Father declared to be a baſeneſs, unworthy of his Anceſtors, and diſgraceful to the ſplendor of his Family. It was probable therefore, that he would rejoice at his calamity, and think it a puniſhment of his diſobedience to him, in betaking himſelf to a way of life, from which he had labored ſo earneſtly to diſſuade him.— In ſhort the Summ of St. *Chryſoſtom's* conſolation is this: *That the more* Stagirius *ſuffered in this conflict, the more aſſured he might be, that he was under the peculiar care* "the greater generoſity of that age, to take "God's word without ſuch pledges [1]."

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of heaven; and that by finding no relief, either from the tombs of the Martyrs, which he had ſo often viſited, or from his long abode with thoſe holy Exorciſts, who had never failed of ſucceſs before, he had a clear demonſtration of God's particular regard for him; who would never have hindered the effect of ſo much grace, nor expoſed his own ſervants to ſo much ſhame, if he had not known it conducive to the greater good and probation of Stagirius.

Such were the arts, by which the Saints of this fourth age were ſubjecting the world to the tyranny of ſuperſtition. Not content to make men Chriſtians, they could not reſt till they had made them alſo Monks; till they had perſuaded them, that the onely way of ſerving God was, by rendering themſelves uſeleſs to man; and of ſaving their ſouls, by doing miſchief to their bodies. By this ſenſeleſs cant, they made it their buſineſs, to gain the Mothers chiefly in the firſt place, and through them their children: eſpecially thoſe of the rich and the great; without the leaſt regard to the will of their fathers, the diſtreſs of their families, the breach of filial duty, or the ruin which they wrought to the health, the fortunes, and the happineſs of thoſe, whom they enſnared. We find ſeveral other inſtances of this kind in the works of this ſame *Chryſoſtom*, concerning the heirs of rich families, ſtolen away from from their fathers by the artifices of Monks, which, as he himſelf informs us, raiſed ſuch a clamor and indignation againſt the whole Monkiſh Order, among the generality of the better ſort, as tranſported them almoſt to madneſs; to ſee their children decoyed from them into a life, which they conſidered as utterly ſordid and deſpicable. It was for the ſake of appeaſing theſe clamors, that he compoſed his three books, *againſt the Oppugners of the Monkiſh life*; one of which is addreſſed *to the believing*, and another *to the unbelieving Fathers*, in order to convince them both, of the excellence of this divine *philoſophy*, as it was called, and of the happineſs accruing to their ſons, from their choice and purſuit of it.

[1] Vid. Oper. T. v. p. 455, 271. It. T. vii. 375. E. 376. B. &c.

From theſe teſtimonies, one would neceſſarily conclude, upon the authority of St. *Chryſoſtom*, that miracles were ceaſed in his days : yet in other parts of his works we find him in a different ſtory, and haranguing on the mighty wonders, which were performed among them every day, *by the reliques of the Martyrs, in caſting out Devils, curing all diſeaſes, and drawing whole Cities and people to their Sepulchres* [1]. He diſplays alſo the miraculous cures, wrought by the uſe of *conſecrated oil, and by the ſign of the Croſs :* which laſt he calls *a defence againſt all evil, and a medicine againſt all ſickneſs, and affirms it to have been miraculouſly impreſſed, in his own time, on people's garments* [2].

St. *Auſtin* alſo, who lived at the ſame time, though in a different part of the world, takes notice of the ſame objection, made by the Sceptics, with which the Chriſtians were commonly urged in this age. " They aſk us, ſays he, *Why* " *are not thoſe miracles performed now, which you* " *declare to have been wrought formerly ?* I could " tell them, that they were then neceſſary, be- " fore the world believed, for this very purpoſe, " that the world might believe ; but he, who " ſtill requires prodigies, that he may become a " believer, is himſelf a great prodigy, who does " not believe now, when the world does be- " lieve [3]." One would not imagine, that theſe words, which ſeem to imply a ceſſation of miracles, were the preface to an elaborate narrative and ſolemn atteſtation of great numbers of them, ſaid to have been wrought in theſe very times: which, if true, as they are here affirmed by St. *Auſtin* from his own knowledge, muſt have been more illuſtrious, both for the number and excellence of them, than all, which were wrought by the Apoſtles themſelves.

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[1] Vid. Oper. T. iii. p. 338, 339.

[2] Ibid. T. xi. p. 387. A. it. T. v. p. 271. D.

[3] Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula, quæ prædicatis facta eſſe, non fiunt ? poſ-

But before we deſcend to particulars, I cannot forbear obſerving, what this Father has delivered concerning the general ſtate and credit of them among the Chriſtians themſelves, at the very time, when they were wrought. He tells us then, " that though miracles were frequently " wrought, either by the *name of Jeſus, or by his* " *Sacraments, or by the prayers or the memorials of* " *the Martyrs*; yet the fame of them was not ſo " illuſtrious, as of thoſe of the Apoſtles: ſince " they were ſcarce ever known to the whole " City or place, where they happened to be per" formed; but for the moſt part, to a very few " onely; while all the reſt were utterly ignorant " of them; eſpecially if the city was large: and " if ever they were told abroad to other people, " yet they were not recommended with ſuch " authority, as to be received without difficulty

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ſem quidem dicere, neceſſaria prius fuiſſe, quam crederet mundus, ad hoc, ut crederet mundus. Quiſquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquirit, magnum eſt ipſe prodigium, qui, mundo credente, non credit. De Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. 8.

" and doubting, though reported by true believers, to true believers [1]."

That he might put an end therefore to this ſtrange negligence of the Chriſtians, with regard to their own miracles, he took care, as oft as he heard of any miracle, " that the parties concerned in it ſhould be examined, and a verbal " proceſs, or authentic narrative be drawn of the " fact, which was afterwards publicly read to " the people. Yet all this caution, as he ſays, " was not ſufficient to make the miracles known, " or at all regarded: becauſe thoſe, who were " preſent at the recital of ſuch narratives, heard " them but once, while the greater part were " abſent: and even thoſe, who heard them, retained nothing, a few days after, of what they " had heard, and ſeldom or never took the " pains, to tell it to any body elſe, whom they " knew to be abſent [2]." This account of the matter would be very ſurprizing, were it not explaned to us by the miracles themſelves; of which I have here added a few ſpecimens, whence we ſhall eaſily collect the reaſon of that coldneſs and indifference, which the people of thoſe days expreſſed towards them.

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[1] Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula, in ejus nomine, ſive per ſacramenta ejus, ſive per orationes vel memorias Sanctorum ejus, ſed non eadem claritate illuſtrantur — & quando alibi, aliiſque narrantur, non tanta ea commendat actuoritas, ut ſine difficultate, vel dubitatione credantur, quamvis Chriſtianis fidelibus a fidelibus indicentur. Ibid. § 1.

[2] Ut nec illi, qui adfuerunt, poſt aliquot dies, quod audierunt, mente retineant;

For inſtance, among many other ſtories of the ſame kind, he relates theſe, which follow: “a pious old Cobler of *Hippo*, where he himſelf was biſhop, having loſt his old coat, and wanting money to buy a new one, betook himſelf to *the twenty Martyrs*, whoſe chapel or memorial was famous in that city; where he prayed to them very earneſtly, that he might be enabled by them to get ſome cloaths. Some young Fellows, who overheard him, began to make ſport with him, and purſued him with their ſcoffs, for begging money to buy a coat. But as the old man walked away, without minding them, he ſaw a large fiſh lie gaſping on the ſhore, which he caught by the help of the young men, and ſold to a Chriſtian Cook, for three hundred pence; and laying out the money on wool, ſet his wife to work, to provide cloaths for him: but the Cook, cutting open the fiſh, found a gold ring alſo in the belly of it; which, out of compaſſion to the poor man, and the terror alſo of religion, he preſently carried to the Cobler, ſaying, *See here is the cloathing, which the twenty Martyrs have given you* [1].

“There was one *Heſperius* likewiſe, as he tells us, a man of Tribunician quality, whoſe coun-

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& vix quiſquam reperiatur illorum, qui ei, quem non adfuiſſe cognoverit, indicet quod audivit. Ibid. § 21.

[1] Ad viginti Martyres, quorum Memoria apud nos eſt celeberrima, clara voce, ut veſtiretur, oravit, &c. Ib. § 9.

" try houſe near *Hippo* was haunted by evil " ſpirits, and his cattle alſo and ſervants afflicted " by them: upon which he ſent a meſſage to " the Prieſts at *Hippo*, when *Auſtin* happened to " be abſent, that ſome of them would come over " to him, and drive the evil Spirits away by " their prayers. One of them accordingly " went, and offered *the ſacrifice of Chriſt's body* " upon the ſpot, praying at the ſame time, as " fervently as he was able, that this vexation " might be removed; upon which by God's " mercy it inſtantly ceaſed [1].

" The ſame *Heſperius* had received from a " friend ſome *holy earth*, brought from *Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt roſe from his grave on the " third day; which earth he hung up in his bed-chamber, to ſecure himſelf from the miſchief " of thoſe evil ſpirits. But ſince his houſe was " now cleared of them, he was conſidering, what " he ſhould do with this earth, being unwilling, " out of reverence to it, to keep it any longer " in his bed-chamber. It happened, that St. " *Auſtin* and another Biſhop, called *Maximinus*, " were then in the neighbourhood; ſo that " *Heſperius* ſent them an invitation to come to " his houſe; which they immediately accepted; " and after he had acquainted them with the " whole affair, he deſired, that *the ſacred earth* " might be depoſited ſomewhere in the Ground, " and an Oratory built over it, where the " Chriſtians might aſſemble for the performance

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[1] Ibid. § 6.

" of divine ſervice: the two Biſhops had no " objection, ſo that his Project was preſently " executed. There was at the ſame place a " country lad, afflicted with the palſy; who " having heard what was done, begged of his " parents, that they would carry him without " delay to that holy place, whither as ſoon as " he was brought, he put up his prayers, and " preſently returned back on foot in perfect " health [1]."

There are many more tales of this ſort, as contemptible as any in the Popiſh legends, and all atteſted by this celebrated Father, from his own knowledge: yet theſe are nothing to the extravagant things, which he goes on to relate, of *the reliques of the Martyr* Stephen. For as *reliques* were now become the moſt precious treaſure of the Church, ſo theſe of St. *Stephen*, after they had lain buried and unknown for near four centuries, were revealed in a viſion, to one *Lucianus* a Prieſt, *by* Gamaliel, *the celebrated Doctor of the law*, *at whoſe feet St.* Paul *had been bred*, and being found by his direction, were removed with great ſolemnity, and many miracles, into *Jeruſalem* [2]. The fame of theſe reliques was ſoon ſpread through the Chriſtian world; and many little portions of them brought away by holy Pilgrims, to enrich the particular Churches of their own countries. For wherever any reliques were depoſited, an Oratory or Chapel was always built over them, which was called *a Memorial* of that Martyr, whoſe reliques it contained. Several reliques therefore of St. *Stephen* having been brought by different people into *Afric*, as many memorials of him were conſequently erected in different places, of which three were peculiarly famous, one at *Hippo*, where St. *Auſtin* was Biſhop, a ſecond at *Calama*, and a third at *Uzalis*, two other Epiſcopal cities; and many great and illuſtrious miracles were continually wrought in them all.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] The hiſtory of this revelation of St. *Stephen's reliques*, and of the miracles, which were wrought by them, is particularly delivered by ſeveral ancient writers, whoſe pieces are annexed, as an Appendix to the ſeventh Volume of St. *Auſtin*. Edit. Benedict. And the ſame revelation is referred to likewiſe by St. *Auſtin* himſelf in different parts of his works.

St. *Auſtin* has given us a particular relation of ſome of them, by which *the gout*, *the ſtone*, *and fiſtula's*, were inſtantly cured; *the blind reſtored to ſight*; *and five different perſons raiſed even from death to life.* Two of whom were *carried dead to the reliques, and brought back alive:* two more reſtored to life, by the virtue of *their garments onely*, which had touched the reliques; and a fifth, *by the oil of the Martyr's lamps.* After all which wonderful ſtories, he adds the following apology, not for telling us ſo many of them, but ſo few, out of the infinite number, which were publicly known and recorded.

“What ſhall I do? ſays he: I am engaged “by promiſe, to finiſh the preſent work, ſo “that it is not poſſible for me, in this place, to

" relate all the miracles which I know; and our " people, without doubt, when they read theſe, " will be grieved, that I have omitted ſo many, " which they know to be true, as well as I. But " I beg them to excuſe me, and to conſider " what a tedious piece of work it would be, to " do that, which the nature of my argument " does not oblige me to do here. For were I " to relate onely the miracles of cures, without " mentioning the reſt, which have been per- " formed by this Martyr, the moſt glorious " *Stephen*, in the colony of *Calama*, and in our " own, it would fill a great number of volumes, " nor would it be poſſible to collect them all, " but ſuch of them onely, of which certificates " have been made, and read to the people. For " this I ordered to be done, when I ſaw the ef- " fects of the divine powers, like to thoſe of the " ancients, ſo frequently exerted alſo in our own " times, which ought not be loſt from the no- " tice of the multitude. It is not yet two years " ſince this memorial was founded at *Hippo*, and " though I am certain, that no account was " taken of many of the miracles, yet at the " time, when I wrote this, the number of cer- " tificates publicly made, amounted to near ſe- " venty: but at *Calama*, where the memorial is " of longer ſtanding, and certificates more fre- " quently taken, they reach to a far greater " number.

" At *Uzalis* alſo, we know many eminent mi- " racles wrought by the ſame Martyr; whoſe

" memorial was inſtituted there by their Bi-
" ſhop *Evodius*, much earlier than with us. But
" it is not the cuſtom with them to take certi-
" ficates, or it was not rather, becauſe now it
" is probably begun. For when I was lately
" there, I exhorted *Petronia*, a celebrated Ma-
" tron, who had been miraculouſly cured of a
" great and lingering illneſs, in which the Phy-
" ſicians were not able to help her, to get a cer-
" tificate drawn of the caſe, and read publicly
" to the people, to which, by the advice alſo
" of the ſaid Biſhop of the place, ſhe willingly
" conſented, and inſerted in it another miracle,
" which, notwithſtanding the haſte that I am
" in, to put an end to this work, I cannot for-
" bear relating, &c. [1]"

I have dwelt the longer on theſe miracles, than the importance of them perhaps may be thought to require: but they are ſo preciſely deſcribed and authentically atteſted, by one of the moſt venerable Fathers in all antiquity, who affirms them to have been wrought within his own knowledge, and under his own eyes, that they ſeem of all others the beſt adapted, to evince the truth of what I have been advancing, and to illuſtrate the real character of all the other miracles of the primitive times, both before and after them. Dr. *Chapman* however, ſpeaking of the very ſame miracles, roundly declares them all, *to be ſo ſtrongly atteſted, both by the effects, and the relators of them, that to doubt their*

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[1] De Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. viii. § 20, 21.

reality,

reality, were to doubt the evidence of ſenſe [1]. On theſe then, I am content to reſt the fate of my whole argument; and if either Dr. *Chapman* or Dr. *Berriman* can maintain theſe miracles to be credible, ſhall no longer diſpute the credibility of any, from the Apoſtolic times down to our own. But, on the other hand, if miracles ſo ſtrictly examined by a moſt Holy Biſhop, confirmed by the certificates of eye-witneſſes, and rehearſed publicly to the people, at the time when they are ſaid to have been wrought cannot command our belief, theſe Doctors muſt needs confeſs, nay, they have already confeſſed, that the Chriſtian Church can ſhew no other, except thoſe of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, which can make any better pretenſions to it.

For not to inſiſt on the objections, which might reaſonably be made to the probability of the facts themſelves; to the incompetency of the inſtruments, by which, and of the ends, for which, they are ſaid to have been performed; to the credulity of a prejudiced, or the fidelity rather of an artful and intereſted relator; it ſeems evident, from the neglect with which they were treated by the Chriſtians themſelves; from the obſcurity in which they lay; from the diligence of St. *Auſtin*, to ſearch them out; to get certificates of them; and to publiſh them to the people; and from the inſufficiency of all his pains, to make them ſtill regarded, or at all remembered; that the people themſelves ſaw or ſuſpected the cheat, and were tired with the repeated frauds of this kind, which their Biſhops were impoſing upon them. For it is not poſſible to conceive any other reaſon of ſo ſurprizing a coldneſs, in a caſe of all others the moſt warming, but a general perſuaſion, grounded on experience, that theſe pretended miracles were nothing elſe but forgeries, contrived to enforce ſome favorite doctrine or rite, which the rulers of the Church were deſirous to eſtabliſh.

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[1] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 174.

Yet theſe are not the ſtories, which chiefly ſhock Mr. *Dodwell*, and oblige him to reject the miracles of the fourth Century; but others ſtill more extravagant, though atteſted likewiſe by perſons of equal eminence and authority; by St. *Athanaſius*, St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, St. *Jerom*, St. *Epiphanius*, &c. Of which therefore, it will be neceſſary to add a ſpecimen or two, from each of thoſe Fathers.

St. *Athanaſius*, in the Preface to his life of St. *Anthony* the Monk, declares, "that he had inſerted nothing in it, but what he either knew "to be true, having often ſeen the Saint him"ſelf, or what he had learnt from one, who "had long miniſtered to him, and poured wa"ter upon his hands [1]." In this life then, after a great number of monſtrous ſtories, concerning the perſonal conflicts, which this Saint continually ſuſtained with all the ſeveral Devils, and powers of Hell, who aſſaulted him in every ſhape, which could imprint terror; and exerted every art, and even corporal puniſhments, to drive him from the monaſtic life, which threatened the ſpeedy ruin of their Kingdom, he tells us, "that ſome body knocking one day at his " Cell, *Authony* went to the door, where he ſaw " a tall meager perſon, who being aſked his " name, anſwered, *that he was Satan.*——His " buſineſs, it ſeems, was to beg a truce of the " Saint, and to expoſtulate with him, on ac-" count of the perpetual reproaches and curſes, " which the Monks ſo undeſervedly beſtowed " on him, when he was no longer in condition " to give them any trouble: for ſince the deſert " was now filled with Monks, and the Chri-" ſtians ſpread into all places, he was diſarmed " of all power to do them any miſchief: ſo that " the Chriſtians had nothing more to do, but to take care of themſelves, and to forbear their " needleſs curſes againſt him [1]." The reſt of this piece is filled with many other miracles of the ſame ſtamp, too trifling to deſerve any regard.

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[1] Διὰ τοῦτο ἅπερ αὐτός τε γινώσκω (πολλάκις γὰρ αὐτὸν ἑώρακα) καὶ ἃ μαθεῖν ἠδυνήθην παρὰ τοῦ ἀκολουθήσαντος αὐτῷ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον — γράψαι τῇ εὐλαβείᾳ ὑμῶν ἐσπούδασα. Oper. T. ii. p. 451. Edit. Par.

St. *Gregory* of *Nyſſa*, in the life of his Nameſake, called the Wonder-worker, has this ſtory, "that the *Virgin Mary*, accompanied by St. " *John* the Evangeliſt, appeared to *Gregory* in " a viſion, and explaned to him the myſtery of " Godlineſs, in a ſhort Creed or divine ſum-mary of faith, which he took down in writing, as they dictated it to him, and left the copy of it, a legacy to the Church of *Neocæſarea*, of which he was Biſhop: and if any one, ſays he, has a mind to be ſatisfied of the truth of this, let him inquire of that Church, in which the very words, as they were written by his bleſſed hand, are preſerved to this day: which, for the excellency of the divine grace, may be compared with thoſe tables of the law, made by God and delivered to *Moſes* [1]."

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[1] Ibid. p. 476.

Dr. *Waterland* has given us a tranſlation of this Creed, and Dr. *Berriman*, an abſtract of it; which is *as expreſs as poſſible*, they ſay, *for the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was taught afterwards by* Athanaſius. They both however intimate, that the genuineneſs of the Creed had been called in quæſtion, though without any ſufficient cauſe [2]. Yet the learned *Cave*, who for zeal, and orthodoxy, and facility of believing, was ſcarce inferior to any, declares, *that notwithſtanding the authority of* Gregory Nyſſen, *who was apt to be too credulous, this ſhort expoſition of the Chriſtian faith will hardly find credit with prudent and ſenſible men* [3]. But whatever may be alledged to perſuade us, that this Creed was actually profeſſed and taught by *Gregory*, in his Church of *Neocæſarea*, yet no man ſurely but Dr. *Berriman*, could have any ſcruple to own, that the ſtory of the viſion, and of its delivery to him from heaven, was a forgery, contrived to ſupport the *Athanaſian doctrine*, at a time when it was warmly controverted, and in danger of being ſuppreſſed. But as the revelation of it, if admitted to be true, would put an end at once to all diſpute, and give a divine ſanction to the Doctrine itſelf, ſo the Doctor ſeems reſolved not to part with: for in his *Hiſtorical account of the Trinitarian controverſy*, ſpeaking on this very point, he ſays, "there "are many arguments to convince us of the "genuineneſs and authority of this Creed of "St. *Gregory:* I do not mean of its being "taught him by revelation *(though that may be "well atteſted too, and will not ſeem incredible to "thoſe, who ſhall conſider, how highly this great "perſon was diſtinguiſhed by the chariſmata, or "extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghoſt)* but I "mean, as to the certainty of its having been "taught by St. *Gregory*," *&c.* [1]. From which we ſee, that though his ſole buſineſs in this place was, to prove the Creed to have been really *Gregory's*, yet he could not forbear to acquaint us, that, if there was occaſion, he could prove *the revelation* alſo to be genuin: ſince it cannot enter his head, how any one ſhould think it incredible, that, in thoſe miraculous ages, a perſon of *Gregory's* exalted character might be favored with a viſit from heaven, by the *Virgin Mary* and St. *John the Apoſtle.*

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[1] Vid. Greg. Nyſſ. Vit. S. Greg. Thaumaturg. p. 978. Op. T. ii. Ed. Par.

[2] See Waterland. Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 232. and Berrim. Hiſtoric. Acc. of the Trinitar. Controverſ. p. 138, 141.

[3] Vid. Hiſtor. Literar. in Vita Greg. Thaumaturgi, p. 132.

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[1] Berrim. ibid. p. 138.

The ſame *Gregory* of *Nyſſa* relates likewiſe, "how his Name-ſake, being upon a journey, "was forced one night to take ſhelter in an "Heathen Temple, famed for an Oracle and "and divination; where the Dæmons uſed to "appear viſibly, and offer themſelves to the "Prieſts. But the holy Father, by invoking "the name of *Jeſus*, put them all to flight; "and by making the Sign of the Croſs, puri- "fied the air, polluted by the ſteam of their "ſacrifices.——The next morning, when the "Prieſt came to perform his uſual functions, "the Devils appeared, and acquainted him, "that they had been driven out the night before "by a ſtranger, and had not the power to re- "turn: nor was he able to recall them by all "the charms of his expiatory ſacrifices. Upon "this, the Prieſt purſued *Gregory* in great "wrath, and overtaking him on the road, "threatened him moſt terribly, for what he had "done. But *Gregory*, deſpiſing his threats, "gave him to underſtand, that he had a power "ſuperior to that of Devils, and could drive "them whitherſoever he pleaſed. The Prieſt "amazed at what he ſaid, began to beg, that "for a proof of his power, he would fetch them "back again into the Temple; to which *Gre- "gory* conſenting, wrote this ſhort note onely, "upon a ſchedule of paper, *Gregory to Satan*,

" *Enter*. With this the Prieſt was diſmiſſed, " and laying the little ſchedule upon the Altar, " brought the Devils back again immediately " to their old ſeats." The miracle however, had the good effect of converting the Pagan Prieſt [1].

I have already given a paſſage from the Life of St. *Hilarion* the Monk, written by St. *Jerom*, as a ſpecimen of the fidelity of the writer.—But for a proof of the fabulous genius of the fourth century, Mr. *Dodwell* refers us to another Life of *the Hermit Paul*, compiled by the ſame Father, which is filled with ſtories ſtill more monſtrous; " of *Satyrs* and *Fauns* preſenting them- " ſelves to the Hermit, and confeſſing their own " mortality, and the folly of the Gentiles in " paying them any worſhip, and begging his " recommendation of them to their common " Lord, who came to ſave the world: of a ra- " ven bringing half a loaf for ſixty years ſuc- " ſucceſſively to the Hermit, for his daily food " in the wilderneſs; and then a whole loaf, " when St. *Anthony* came to viſit him: of two " Lions, coming to aſſiſt *Anthony* in the burial " of *Paul*, by digging a grave for him with " their feet, and then departing with the bleſ- " ſing of *Anthony* [2]."

St. *Epiphanius*, Biſhop of *Salamis* in *Cyprus*, who is ſaid to have wrought miracles himſelf,

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[1] Vid. Greg. Nyſſ. ibid. p. 981.

[2] Hieron. Vit. Pauli Eremit. Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 71. Edit. Benedict.

both in his life-time and after it [1], affirms ſeveral falſe and abſurd miracles from his own knowledge, which his advocates gently paſs over, by remarking onely, that *this moſt holy Father was too credulous*, or *not ſo accurate*, as we could wiſh [2]. He declares, "that in imita-
"tion of our Saviour's miracle at *Cana* in *Gali-*
"*lee*, ſeveral fountains and rivers in his days
"were annually turned into wine. A fountain
"of *Cibyra*, a city of *Caria*, ſays he, and an-
"other at *Geraſa* in *Arabia*, prove the truth of
"this. I myſelf have drunk out of the foun-
"tain of *Cibyra*, and my brethren out of the
"other at *Geraſa:* and many teſtify the ſame
"thing of the river *Nile* in *Egypt* [3]." Should we then be aſked here, as we were before in a ſimilar caſe, *Will ye not believe a moſt holy Biſhop, in a fact atteſted by his own ſenſes?* the anſwer is clear and ſhort; *The fact is not credible.*

St. *Chryſoſtom*, celebrating the acts of the Martyr St. *Babylas*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, ſays,
"the Gentiles will laugh, to hear me talk of the
"acts of perſons dead, and buried, and con-

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[1] Vid. Vit. Epiphan. c. 37, 66, &c. Op. Tom. ii. p. 350. Edit. Par.

[2] Quæ de Melchiſedeci parentibus narrat *Epiphanius*, redolent apochryphorum ſomnia, cujuſmodi multa ſunt in hoc opere bona fide a Sanctiſſimo Patre deſcripta. Petav. Not. in pag. 217. T. ii. Majori fide digna, quam quæ habet alia pleraque Pater ille parum accuratus. Dodw. Diſſer. Iren. ii. § 29.

[3] Πεπώκαμεν ἀπὸ τῆς Κιβύρης, ἡμέτεροι δὲ ἀδελφοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν Γεράσῃ ϖηγῆς—ϗ ϖολλοὶ δὲ ϗ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ϖερὶ τοῦ Νείλου τοῦτο μαρτυροῦσι. Adv. Hæreſ. l ii. cxxx. p. 451. Tom. i.

ſumed to duſt; but they are not to imagine, that the bodies of Martyrs, like to thoſe of common men, are left deſtitute of all active force and energy, ſince a greater power than that of the human ſoul is ſuperadded to them, the power of the Holy Spirit; which, by working miracles in them, demonſtrates the truth of the reſurrection.”——He then procedes to inform us, “ how the remains of this Martyr were removed by a certain Emperor, out of the city of *Antioch* into a ſuburb of it, called *Daphne*, famous for the delights of its ſituation, and the variety of pleaſures which it afforded to its inhabitants, as well as for a celebrated Temple and *Oracle of Apollo Daphneus*; to which the body of the Saint was thought proper to be removed, for the ſake of giving ſome check to the lewdneſs and licentiouſneſs that reigned in the place. The Coffin therefore was no ſooner depoſited, in a chapel provided for it, than the Oracle of *Apollo* was ſtruck dumb at once: ſo that when *Julian* the Apoſtate came afterwards to conſult it, he could receive no other anſwer from *Apollo*, *but that the dead would not ſuffer him to ſpeak any longer* [1]. Wherefore *Julian* commanded the bones of St. *Babylas* to be

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[1] “ By which anſwer we may underſtand, ſays Sir *Iſ. Newton*, that ſome Chriſtian was got into the place, where the Heathen Prieſts uſed to ſpeak thro' a pipe, in delivering their Oracles.” See Obſervat. on the Prophecies of *Daniel*, par. i. p. 210.

" conveyed back again into *Antioch*; but in the " very moment, when they entered into the " city, the Statue of the God, and the roof of " his Temple, were deſtroyed by lightning, " upon the interceſſion of the Saint [1]." St. *Chryſoſtom* employs an entire Homily, and a larger diſcourſe which follows it, in haranguing on this ſame ſubject of *Babylas*; and on the bleſſings and daily miracles, wrought by the reliques of the Martyrs, to the edification of the Church, and the confuſion of unbelievers [2]. Yet his hiſtory of this Saint is ſo evidently fabulous and romantic, that the *Benedictin Monks*, who publiſhed the laſt and beſt edition of his works, found it neceſſary to admoniſh the reader, *that it is written in a declamatory ſtyle, overflowing with rhetorical figures, and for the moſt part deſtitute of truth* [3]. In which thoſe learned Papiſts have ſhewn more candor, as well as judgement, than our Proteſtant Doctor *Cave*: who, in his Life of the ſame *Babylas*, after relating the particular ſtory juſt deſcribed, which he calls *one of the moſt memorable occurrences, that Church Antiquity has conveyed to us*, adds the following atteſtation to it:

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[1] Καὶ ὅτι ὐκ ἁπλῶς κομπάζων ταῦτα λέγω νῦν—ἱκανὰ μὲν τὸν λόγον πιςώσαθαι, κ̀ τὰ καθ' ἑκάςην ἡμέραν ὑπὸ τῶν Μαρτύρων γινόμενα θαύματα. Ib. p. 555.

[2] Vid. Oper. Tom. ii. p. 531, 533, 534, 564, &c.

[3] Argumentum libri, eſt hiſtoria Martyrii S. Babylæ—declamatorio more narrata, tropiſque redundans; in qua plerumque veritatem deſideres. Admonit. in Serm. ibid. p. 530.

" The reader, 'tis like, may be apt to ſcru-" ple this ſtory, as ſavouring a little of ſuper-" ſtition, and giving too much honor to the " reliques of Saints. To which I ſhall ſay no " more, than that the credit of it ſeems unquæ-" ſtionable; it being reported not onely by *So-" crates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret*, who all lived " very near that time, but by *Chryſoſtom*, who " was born at *Antioch*, and was a long time " Preſbyter of that Church, and was ſcholar " there to *Libanius* the Sophiſt, at the very time " when the thing was done, and an eye-witneſs " of it; and who not onely preached the thing, " but wrote a diſcourſe againſt the Gentiles on " this very ſubject; where he appeals to the " knowledge both of young and old then alive, " who had ſeen it, and challenges them to ſtand " up and contradict, if they could, the truth " of what he related. Nay, which farther puts " the caſe paſt all peradventure, *Libanius* the " Orator evidently confeſſes it," &c. [1]: whereas all, which that Orator confeſſes, and which the Benedictins allow to be well grounded in the whole relation, is, that the reliques of *Babylas* were carried back again, by *Julian's* order, out of *Daphne* into the City; and that the Temple of the *Daphnean Apollo* was ſoon after deſtroyed in the night by fire; which the Chriſtians declared to have been ſent from heaven by the power of the Saint; and the Heathens aſcribed to the revenge and contrivance of the Chriſtians [1].

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[1] See his Lives of the Prim. Fathers. Life of Babyl, Vol. i. p. 247.

A Popiſh writer, with whom I have been engaged, in order to reprove my raillery on their fictitious Saints and Image-worſhip, has alledged alſo a moſt notable miracle, from this fourth century; which I ſhall here add to the Specimens already given.

“ When *Julian* the *Apoſtate* was purſuing his “ *Perſian* expedition, and at the very time, “ when he is ſuppoſed to have been deſtroyed “ by the immediate hand of God, the great St. “ *Baſil* was ſtanding before the *Image of the* “ *Bleſſed Virgin*, on which there was painted “ likewiſe the figure of St. *Mercurius*, an eminent Martyr: and while St. *Baſil* was fervently praying, that the impious and atheiſtical *Julian* might be cut off, he received this “ revelation from the picture; out of which the “ figure of the Martyr quite vaniſhed for a little while, but preſently appeared again, and “ held out *a bloody ſpear*; as a token of what

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[1] *Julian* ſuſpected the Chriſtians to have ſet fire to this Temple, on the account of his removal of the body of St. *Babylas*: for which reaſon, he ordered ſome of them to be put to the rack, and their great Church in *Antioch* to be ſhut up; as we are told by *Ammianus Marcellinus*: who mentions another report alſo, though more ſlightly grounded, of a different cauſe of that accident. [l. xxii. c. 13. Vid. it. Julian. Miſopogon. Oper. T. i. p. 361. Edit. Spanh. 1696.] The Chriſtians, ſays *Sozomen*, took the fire to be ſent from heaven, at the requeſt of the Martyr, but the Gentiles look upon it as the act of the Chriſtians. Lib. v. c. 20.

“ had happened in the ſamè moment to *Ju-*
“ *lian* [1].”

But *Julian's* death was foretold likewiſe by *viſions*, and *divine revelations*, as the Eccleſiaſtical writers inform us, to ſeveral other Saints and holy men, in different parts of the world, who were ſeverally addreſſing their prayers to God for his deſtruction [2]. Whence we cannot but obſerve, what a total change there was, both of principles and practice, between the Fathers of the fourth, and thoſe of the preceding ages; or between the Church when perſecuted, and when eſtabliſhed in power and authority. For in the earlier times, under the very worſt of the Heathen Emperors, and the cruelleſt perſecutors of the Church, when the Chriſtians were treated every where as traitors to the government, all their Apologiſts, through the three firſt centuries, declare with one voice, that they were obliged by the precepts of their religion, to be of all men the moſt loyal to their princes, and that it was their daily practice, to put up their united prayers for their proſperity. We pray, ſays *Tertullian*, *for every Emperor*; *that he may have a long life*, *ſecure reign*, *a ſafe houſe*,

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[1] Ἐξ ἧς εἰκόνος ἐμυήθη ταύτην τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν· ἑώρα γὰρ πρὸς μὲν βραχὺ ἀφανῆ τὸν μάρτυρα, μετ' οὐ πολὺ δὲ, τὸ δόρυ ᾑμαγμένον κατέχοντα. Joh. Damaſcen. Oper. T. i. p. 327. E. Edit. Par. pr. Lequien.

N. B. This ſtory is ſaid to have been recorded by *Helladius*, the diſciple and ſucceſſor of St. *Baſil*, in the Biſhoprick of *Cæſarea*, in the Life which he wrote of St. *Baſil*.

[2] Vid. Sozom. l. vi. c. 2.

ſtrong armies, faithful ſenate, honeſt people, a quiet world, and whatſoever elſe, man, or Cæſar himſelf, can wiſh [1]. Yet, after the Church had gained a firm eſtabliſhment, its temper was quite altered; and the Emperors no ſooner began to give them any diſturbance, than their prayers were turned into curſes; and the divine vengeance confeſſedly implored to deſtroy them. So true it is, what all the Popiſh writers have not ſcrupled to affirm, from *Pope Gregory the Great*, down to *Cardinal Bellarmine*, *that it was not the want of will, but of the power onely to rebel, which made the primitive Chriſtians ſo patient under the perſecuting Emperors, and particularly under Julian, becauſe the Church had not yet acquired ſtrength enough, to controul the Princes of the earth* [2].

Now it is agreed by all, that theſe Fathers, whoſe teſtimonies I have juſt been reciting, were the moſt eminent lights of the fourth century; all of them ſainted by the Catholic Church; and highly reverenced at this day in all Churches, for their piety, probity, and learning: yet, from the ſpecimens of them, above given, it is evident, that they would not ſcruple, to propagate any fiction, how groſs ſoever, which ſerved to promote the intereſt, either of Chriſtianity in general, or of any particular rite or doctrine, which they were deſirous to recommend. St. *Jerom* in effect confeſſes it; for after the mention of a ſilly ſtory, concerning the Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem*, who uſed to ſhew, in the ruins of the Temple, *certain ſtones of a reddiſh color*, which they pretended to have been ſtained by the blood of *Zacharias, the ſon of Barachias, who was ſlain between the Temple and the Altar*; he adds, *but I do not find fault with an error, which flows from an hatred of the Jews, and a pious zeal for the Chriſtian faith* [1].

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[1] Ὅθεν θεὸν μὲν μόνον προσκυνοῦμεν, ὑμῖν δὲ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα χαίροντες ὑπηρετοῦμεν ϗ εὐχόμενοι μετὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως ϗ σώφρονα τὸν λόγισμον ἔχοντας ὑμᾶς εὑρεθῆναι. Juſt. Martyr. Appl. i. p. 26.

Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium ſecurum—& quæcunque hominis, & Cæſaris vota ſunt. Apolog. § 30.

Deprecamur diebus ac noctibus & pro ſalute populi, & pro ſtatu Imperatorum veſtrorum. Vid. Act. Paſſion. Cyprian. apud Cyprian. p. 16. Edit. Rigaltii.

[2] See Chillingworth's Works, 7th Edit. p. 283. & Not. *.

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[1] Non condemnamus errorem, qui de odio Judæorum, & fidei pietate deſcendit. Oper. T. iv. p. 113.

N. B. The ſame *Jerom*, ſpeaking in another place, of the different manner, which writers found themſelves obliged to uſe, in their controverſial and their dogmatical writings, intimates, that in controverſy, whoſe end was victory rather than truth, it was allowable, to employ every artifice, which would beſt ſerve to conquer an adverſary: in proof of which, "*Origen*, ſays he, *Methodius*, *Euſebius*, *Apollinaris*, have written many thouſands of lines, againſt *Celſus* and *Porphyry*: conſider with what arguments and what ſlippery problems, they baffle what was contrived againſt them by the Spirit of the Devil: and becauſe they are ſometimes forced to ſpeak, they ſpeak not what they think, but what is neceſſary, againſt thoſe, who are called Gentiles. I do not mention the latin writers, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Minutius*; *Victorinus*, *Lactantius*, *Hilarius*, leſt I be thought, not ſo much to be defending myſelf, as accuſing others." Op. T. iv. p. 236.

If the miracles then of the fourth century, ſo ſolemnly atteſted by the moſt celebrated and revered Fathers of the Church, are to be rejected after all as fabulous, it muſt needs give a fatal blow to the credit of all the miracles even of the preceding centuries; ſince there is not a ſingle Father, whom I have mentioned in this fourth age, who, for zeal and piety, may not be compared with the beſt of the more ancient, and for knowledge and learning, be preferred to them all. For inſtance, there was not a perſon in all the primitive Church, more highly reſpected in his own days, than St. *Epiphanius*, for the purity of his life, as well as the extent of his learning. He was a Maſter of *five languages*, and has left behind him one of the moſt uſeful works, which remain to us from antiquity. St. *Jerom*, who perſonally knew him, calls him, *the Father of all Biſhops, and a ſhining Star among them; the pattern of ancient ſanctity; the man of God of bleſſed memory; to whom the people uſed to flock in crouds, offering their little children to his benediction; kiſſing his feet; and catching the hem of his garment* [1].

All the reſt were men of the ſame character, who ſpent their lives and ſtudies in propagating the faith, and in combating the vices and hæreſies of their times. Yet none of them have ſcrupled, we ſee, to pledge their faith for the truth of facts, which no man of ſenſe can believe, and which their warmeſt admirers are forced to give up as fabulous. If ſuch perſons then could wilfully attempt to deceive; and if the ſanctity of their characters cannot aſſure us of their fidelity; what better ſecurity can we have from thoſe who lived before them? or what cure for our Scepticiſm, with regard to any of the miracles above mentioned? was the firſt aſſertor of them, *Juſtin Martyr*, more pious, cautious, learned, judicious, or leſs credulous, than *Epiphanius?* or were thoſe virtues more conſpicuous in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Arnobius*, and *Lactantius*, than in *Athanaſius*, *Gregory*, *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom*, *Auſtin?* Nobody, I dare ſay, will venture to affirm it. If theſe later Fathers then, biaſſed by a falſe zeal or intereſt, could be tempted to propagate a known lie; or, with all their learning and knowledge, could be ſo weakly credulous, as to believe the abſurd ſtories which they themſelves atteſt; there muſt always be reaſon to ſuſpect, that the ſame prejudices would operate, even more ſtrongly, in the earlier Fathers; prompted by the ſame zeal and the ſame intereſts, yet indued with leſs learning, leſs judgement, and more credulity.

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[1] Oper. Tom. iv. par. ii. p. 312. 313, 417, 443, 727.

But whatever light the fourth Century may give us, in diſcovering the real character of the earlier ages, it affords us at leaſt a ſure preſage of what we are to expect from the fifth, into which we are now entering. Dr. *Waterland* himſelf allows, on the authority of *Nazianzen*, *that the ſtate of the Church towards the end of the fourth*

fourth century was become very corrupt [1]: for that reaſon, as we have elſewhere ſeen, he durſt not venture to appeal, in the caſe of its miracles, to any of the celebrated Fathers above mentioned, as being evidently infected with that corruption. The learned *Moſheim* alſo, a foreign Divine, and zealous advocate of Chriſtianity, who, by his writings againſt the Freethinkers, as Dr. *Chapman* tells us, *has deſerved the eſteem of all good and learned men*, intimates his fears, “ that
“ thoſe, who ſearch with any attention into the
“ writings of the greateſt and moſt holy Doc-
“ tors of the fourth century, will find them all,
“ without exception, diſpoſed *to deceive and to*
“ *lie*, whenever the intereſt of religion requires
“ it [2].” Since the degeneracy therefore of this age has obliged the moſt devoted admirers of antiquity, not onely to ſuſpect, but to reject its miracles as ſpurious, we cannot be at a loſs, what judgement we ought to form on the miracles of the following age, which is allowed by all to have been ſtill more corrupt.

The ſucceeding Fathers, however, go on ſtill as before, to aſſert the ſame miraculous gifts, and even more of them to the fifth, than to any of the preceding ages. Whence a certain infidel writer has taken occaſion to cenſure the credit of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, as being *full of miracles, wrought by ſuch madmen* as Simeon Stylites [3], a

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[1] Import. of the Doct. of the Trin. p. 424.

[2] See Dr. Chapm. Miſcellan. Tracts, p. 191, 207.

[3] See Chriſtianity as old as the Creat. c. viii. p. 89.

Monk of the fifth century; who ſpent the greateſt part of his life on the top of a pillar, from which he drew his ſurname; and whoſe wonderful acts are particularly related by *Theodoret*. Now whether this *Symeon* was a madman or not, the credit of Chriſtianity is no way affected by it. (The Hiſtory of the Goſpel, I hope, may be true, though the Hiſtory of the Church be fabulous.) And if the eccleſiaſtic Hiſtorians have recorded many ſilly fictions, under the name of miracles, as they undoubtedly have, the blame muſt be charged to the writers, not to their religion. But the cenſure came from an Infidel, and for that reaſon, was at all events to be confuted; ſince, to allow a grain of truth to one of that claſs, is to betray the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and to ſtrengthen the hands of its enemies.

This is the principle, which generally animates the zeal, and glares through the writings of the modern advocates of our religion: and which in reality, has done more hurt and diſcredit to it, than all the attacks of its open adverſaries: and it was the ſame principle, without doubt, that gave birth to the defence of *Simeon Stylites*, which Dr. *Chapman*, in his remarks on the Author referred to, has thought fit to attempt in the following words:

"I know our Author too well, to take his
"judgement either of madneſs or ſenſe. 'Tis
"more than probable, that it is madneſs with
"him, to believe any miracles at all, of any per-
"ſon, or at any time. So that we are not to
"wonder,

“ wonder, if *Simeon* and his miracles have no “ ſort of credit with him. For this reaſon I ad- “ dreſs myſelf here, not to him, but to thoſe “ who diſtinguiſh between truth and impoſture, “ between clear and indiſputable evidence, and “ that which is dark and ſuſpicious. The great “ *Theodoret*, whoſe character for ſenſe, learning, “ and piety, is abundantly known and confeſſed, “ was himſelf contemporary with *Simeon Stylites*, “ was perſonally and intimately acquainted with “ him, converſed with him for many years to- “ gether, and declares himſelf an eye-witneſs to “ the wonderful things related of him. He has “ given us an account of a great part of his “ Life, which he wrote while *Simeon* was yet “ alive, and appeals to all the world for the “ truth of what he ſays of him. He farther tells “ us, that *Simeon* by his miracles converted many “ thouſands of Pagans, eſpecially the *Iſhmaelites*, “ or *Saracens*, to the Chriſtian religion; that he “ himſelf, at *Simeon's* deſire, gave many of them “ the Sacerdotal benediction, and was in mani- “ feſt danger of loſing his life, by the impa- “ tience and eagerneſs of the Barbarians to re- “ ceive it from him. If we may not admit ſuch “ evidence as this, in proof of a matter of fact, “ I am afraid, we muſt ſhake the evidence of “ all human teſtimony; and believe nothing, “ but what we ſee, and feel, and know our- “ ſelves. Nay farther, our Author cannot “ prove, that there ever exiſted ſuch a man as “ *Simeon Stylites*, by better evidence, than that

" which I have produced, to prove his mira-
" cles [1]."

Here we ſee what a ſort of character and language is prepared for thoſe, who dare to reject the miracles of *Symeon.* They muſt be men, who *know not how to diſtinguiſh between truth and impoſture*; *between indiſputable and ſuſpicious evidence*; *who ſhake the credit of all human teſtimony, and believe nothing, but what they ſee themſelves.* And all this aſſurance is grounded on the ſingle teſtimony of *Theodoret*, to whom, in order to enhance his authority, he has added, according to his uſual way, the title of *the Great.* But as the Doctor has carried his defence of Monks and their miracles much farther, than any other Proteſtant, I believe, would venture to do, ſo it was natural to ſuſpect, that he had been drawn into it by ſome Popiſh writer, of whom he had conceived a favorable opinion; and we find accordingly, that he has borrowed, not onely his notions, but his very expreſſions from Monſ. *Tillemont*, who talks in the ſame pompous ſtrain, of *Le Grand Theodoret*, *whoſe evidence cannot be ſlighted*, *he ſays*, *without ſhaking the credit of all human teſtimony* [2].

But let him borrow them from whomſoever he pleaſes; my buſineſs is, to inquire onely whether, what he has borrowed and ſo peremptorily affirmed, be true, or credible, or fit for a Proteſtant Divine, to impoſe upon the conſciences of Chriſtians. This therefore is the point; which I ſhall now procede to conſider, from the authority of thoſe very teſtimonies, to which he himſelf has referred us.

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[1] See Miſcell. Tracts, p. 165.

[2] See Tillem. Mem. vol. xv. p. 348.

We are told then by *Theodoret*, "That this "*Symeon* ſpent the firſt part of his life in certain "Monaſteries near *Antioch* in *Syria*, mortifying "his body by horrible auſterities, not onely be-"yond the rules of their ordinary diſcipline, but "above the force even of nature itſelf; till for "his perſeverance in theſe extravagancies, con-"trary to the Admonitions of his rulers, he was "turned out of the ſociety, as giving an exam-"ple, that might be dangerous or fatal to thoſe, "who attempted to imitate it. Upon this he "retired to a ſeparate Cave or Hut, where he "took a fancy, after the example of *Moſes* and "*Elias*, to keep a faſt and total abſtinence from "food, for forty intire days. But when another "holy man called *Baſſus*, repreſented to him the "danger and even ſin of an attempt, which "would probably deſtroy him, he complied ſo "far, as to ſuffer ten loaves, and a pitcher of "water to be immured with him in his cell, "with a promiſe to make uſe of them, if he "happened to want any refreſhment. *Baſſus* "then cloſed up his door with mud, and left "him for forty days; at the end of which, he "returned, and clearing away the mud from the "door, found the ten loaves intire, and the "pitcher alſo full, but *Symeon* ſtretched upon "the ground, quite ſpiritleſs and unable to

“ ſpeak or ſtir, till by the care of his friend, and the application of the ſymbols of the holy myſteries, he was gradually reſtored to his ſtrength and former health. From which time, as *Theodoret* adds, he had then perſevered twenty eight years, in the ſame practice of faſting forty days in each year. During the firſt part of which days, he uſed conſtantly to ſtand: and when through want of nouriſhment he grew too weak to endure that poſture, he then began to ſit; but at the laſt, was forced to lie down half dead and almoſt ſpent [1].”

His next whim was, “ To fix his perpetual ſtation on the top of a pillar, whoſe circumference was hardly of two cubits; and after he had ſpent many years in that poſition, like a ſtatue upon its pedeſtal, on ſeveral different pillars, he mounted one at laſt, thirty ſix cubits high, and lived thirty years upon it: being placed in the middle region, as it were, between heaven and earth; where he converſed with God, and glorified him with Angels; offering up for the men on earth his ſupplications to God, and drawing down from heaven the bleſſings of God upon men [2].” But becauſe theſe pillars allowed no other poſture but that of ſtanding, he contrived a method, which enabled him to endure ſtill the fatigue of his uſual faſts, “ For he got a beam

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[1] Vid. Theodoret. Religioſ. Hiſtor. p. 880. Oper. T. iii. Edit. Pariſ. [2] Ibid. p. 882.

“ fixed to the top of his pillar, to which he tied “ himſelf, and by that ſupport held out the “ whole forty days without changing his poſition; till being ſtrengthened by heaven with “ a larger meaſure of grace, he no longer wanted that help, but ſtood all the time, without “ taſting the leaſt food, yet with eaſe and chearfulneſs [1].”

The manner of paſſing his time on the pillar was this; “ all the nights and days alſo, till “ three in the afternoon, were ſpent by him in “ prayer, in which he uſed continual bowings “ of his body, and always touched his very toes “ with his head. For this, ſays *Theodoret*, was “ eaſy to him, becauſe he made but one meal in “ the week, and that a very light one, ſo that “ his belly being generally empty, gave him no “ obſtruction in bending his back. One of “ thoſe who ſtood by, looking upon him with “ *Theodoret*, had the curioſity to count the number of his bowings, but when he had counted “ to twelve hundred and forty four, he was tired “ and would count them no longer [2]. On “ ſolemn Feſtivals, he ſtood with his hands “ ſtretched out towards heaven, from the ſetting of the Sun, to its riſing, without a wink “ of ſleep the whole night [3].

“ From three in the afternoon it was his “ practice, to preach and to give divine lectures; “ to anſwer all quæſtions and petitions, which “ were offered to him; to cure diſeaſes, and to compoſe differences; but at Sun-ſetting he began to converſe again with God [1]. He wrought innumerable miracles; giving health to the ſick, children to the barren; and diſpenſing ſacred oil to thoſe likewiſe who deſired it [2]." To many of which miracles *Theodoret* declares himſelf to have been an eye-witneſs, as well as to his gift of prophecy, for he heard "him foretell a famine and a peſtilence, and an irruption of locuſts, and the death of one of *Theodoret's* enemies, fifteen days before it happened [3]. One of the miracles, which *Theodoret* ſaw, was this; an eminent *Iſhmaelite* and believer in Chriſt, made a vow to God in the preſence of *Symeon*, that he would abſtain from all animal food during the reſt of his life: but being tempted afterwards to break his vow, he reſolved to eat a fowl, and ordered it to be dreſſed for him accordingly; but when he ſat down to eat, he found the fleſh of it turned into ſtone. The Barbarian, amazed at this miracle, ran away in all haſt to the Saint, proclaming his ſecret crime to all people, and imploring the Saint, by the omnipotence of his prayers, to releaſe him from the bond of this ſin. There were many eye-witneſſes of this miracle, who handled the fowl, and found the part of it about the breaſt, to be compounded of bone and of ſtone [4]:"

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[1] Ibid. 880. [2] Ibid. 887. A. [3] Ibid. D.

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[1] Ibid. 188. B. [2] Ib. 885, 886, &c. [3] Ib. 885. [4] Ibid. B.

By theſe miracles and auſterities, the fame of *Symeon*, as *Theodoret* ſays, was ſpread through the whole world: ſo that people of all nations and languages flocked to him in crouds from the remoteſt parts of the earth; from *Spain* and *Gaul*, and even *Britain* itſelf; and his name was ſo celebrated at *Rome*, *that the Artificers of all kinds had little images of him, placed in the entrance of their ſhops, as a guard and ſecurity to them againſt all ſorts of miſchief* [1].

This is the account in ſhort of the Life of *Symeon Stylites:* the bare recital of which, tho' atteſted by ten *Theodorets*, muſt needs expoſe the abſurdity of believing, that it could in any manner be ſuggeſted or directed by divine inſpiration. Yet Dr. *Chapman* contends, *that there is no better evidence for the very exiſtence of* Symeon, *than we have for his miracles* [2]. By which he means, I ſuppoſe, that we have the ſame evidence for both; the teſtimony of the ſame *Theodoret*, which he imagines to be as good in the one caſe, as in the other: not reflecting, that the ſame witneſs, of whatever character he be, will neceſſarily find a very different degree of credit, according to the different nature of the facts, which he atteſts; and though credible in ſome, may be juſtly contemptible in others. For example, when we are told by *Theodoret*, and after him by *Evagrius*, that a certain Monk called *Symeon*, who was perſonally known to them, took a fancy to live upon a pillar, where he was ſeen every day by many thouſands; we have no reaſon to doubt of it; the thing was notorious, and there were many ſuch Enthuſiaſts in the ſame age; and every one of thoſe thouſands, who ſaw him, were as good witneſſes of it, as *Theodoret* himſelf. But when we are told by the ſame writers, that *Symeon was inſpired by God, and performed many things above the force of human nature:* this is a different caſe, which cannot command the ſame belief; being a matter of opinion, rather than of fact; of which very few could judge, fewer ſtill be certain, and ſcarce one perhaps of all the thouſands, who ſaw him, could be a competent witneſs: while the character of *Symeon* on the one ſide, and of *Theodoret* on the other, ſuggeſt many obvious reaſons againſt the credibility of it.

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[1] 882. A.

[2] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 167.

To illuſtrate this more clearly by a ſimilar inſtance from profane hiſtory. Two claſſical writers of undoubted credit, *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*, have each written the Life and acts of the Emperor *Veſpaſian: who alone*, they ſay, *of all the Princes before him, was made a better man, by his advancement to the Empire* [1]. But the ſame writers alſo declare, that this good Emperor, *by a divine admonition from the God* Serapis, *publicly reſtored a blind man to his ſight, and a cripple to his limbs, in the view of the people of* Alexandria: *and that many years after his death, when there was no reward or temptation for telling ſuch a lie,*

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[1] Soluſque omnium ante ſe Principum, in melius mutatus eſt. Tacit. Hiſt. l. i, c. 50.

ſeveral witneſſes were ſtill living, who had ſeen thoſe miracles performed, and bore teſtimony to the truth of them [1]. Now it is certain, that no body in any age, ever doubted of the exiſtence of *Veſpaſian*, yet many probably in all, and every ſingle man in the preſent, not onely doubt, but reject the ſtory of his miracles: though theſe laſt be affirmed by the ſame writers, who aſſure us of the firſt: to whoſe authority ſtill we pay all the regard, that is due, by believing them in every thing, that is credible; in every thing, of which they were competent witneſſes; and charging the abſurd and fabulous part, to the ſuperſtition, prejudices, and falſe principles, which prevailed in thoſe ages.

The caſe is the ſame with *Theodoret* and all the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, who have tranſmitted to us the Lives and miracles of the Monks, and other pious men of their own times. We take their word, as far as reaſon and religion will permit us; and aſcribe the reſt to the credulity, the prejudices, and erroneous principles, which infected all the writers of thoſe days. The Romaniſts indeed roundly embrace and eſpouſe all the abſurd and fictitious ſtories, which they have delivered to us; and are under a neceſſity of doing ſo, ſince they teach the ſame corrupt doctrines, retain the ſame ſuperſtitious rites, and exerciſe the ſame uſurped powers, for the ſake of which, thoſe very ſtories were originally forged. But no Proteſtants, as far as I have obſerved, except the two Doctors abovementioned, have ever attempted to defend either the miracles, or the principles of the fifth century; but on the contrary, have conſtantly ſignified either their ſuſpicion, or utter contempt of them.

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[1] E plebe quidam luminibus orbatus, item alius debili crure, ſedentem pro tribunali pariter adierunt, orantes opem valetudinis, demonſtratam a *Serapide* per quietem, &c. Sueton. in Vit. c. 7.

Utrumque qui interfuere, nunc quoque memorant, poſtquam nullum mendacio pretium. Tacit. Hiſt. l. iv. c 81.

Mr. *Dodwell*, whoſe piety and zeal for the honor of Chriſtianity were as conſpicuous as his learning, declares, " That nothing does ſo " much diſcredit to the cauſe of miracles in ge- " neral, among the Infidels and Atheiſts, as the " impoſtures of the later ages; meaning the " fourth, fifth, and following centuries. Theſe, " ſays he, they oppoſe to the undoubted credit " of the earlier ages; and becauſe theſe falſe " prodigies deceived the whole world, they in- " fer, that the ancient ones likewiſe, though " falſe, might impoſe in the ſame manner upon " the credulity of mankind [1]."

Dr. *Cave*, the large extent of whoſe faith ſhines through every page of his wrings, yet plainly intimates his ſuſpicion, of what *Theodoret* has atteſted concerning this very *Symeon:* for ſpeaking of the amazing auſterities, which he practiſed, he adds, *moreover, if the Greek writers*

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[1] Atqui nihil eſt quod miraculorum cauſæ univerſæ apud Atheos magis noceat, quam recentiorum Fabulatorum τερατίσματα, &c. Dodw. Diſſert. Iren. ii. § 69.

are to be regarded, he wrought innumerable miracles [1].

Mr. *Collier* alſo, whoſe Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory ſhews, that miracles even of the groſſeſt kind were of no hard digeſtion with him, could not yet digeſt theſe of our *Symeon*, but declares them to be wholly *fabulous, and ſuch, as render the truth itſelf ſuſpected* [2].

Dr. *Hody*, ſo highly eſteemed for his critical and theological learning, obſerves, " that ſtories " concerning miracles are common to all the " writers of Lives, among the Chriſtians of the " middle ages, though otherwiſe good authors: " and that the profeſſed Hiſtorians themſelves, " as *Theodoret* and *Evagrius*, are full of re" lations; which were the reſult of a ſupeſtiti" ous piety [3].

Since the moſt learned then, as well as orthodox of our Divines, and the moſt converſant alſo in Eccleſiaſtical antiquity, have ſo ſtrongly ſignified their diſtruſt, both of the teſtimony of *Theodoret*, and the particular acts of this *Symeon*, it is ſurprizing, that Dr. *Champan* ſhould think it of ſervice to Chriſtianity, to lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon them, and in ſo peremptory a manner, to vindicate the credit of miracles, whoſe ſole tendency is to recommend, as a perfect pattern of the Chriſtian life, the moſt extravagant enthuſiaſm and contemptible ſuperſtition, that any age or hiſtory perhaps has ever produced. For that this was really the caſe, is evident from the writings of *Theodoret* himſelf, whoſe Life of *Symeon Stylites*, is a part onely of his *religious hiſtory*, as it is called; filled with the *Lives of thirty Monks*, of the ſame claſs and character; diſtinguiſhed by their peculiar auſterities; and vying with each other, who could invent the moſt whimſical methods and painful arts of mortifying their bodies.

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[1] Hiſtor. Litterar. T. i. p. 439.

[2] See Dictionar. in Symeon. Styl.

[3] The Caſe of Sees vacated by an unjuſt deprivation, c. x. p. 120.

One of theſe called *Baradatus*, contrived a ſort of cage for his habitation, coarſly formed of lattice work, ſo wide and open, as to expoſe him to all the inclemencies of the weather, and ſo low at the ſame time, that it could not admit the full height of his body, but obliged him *to ſtand always in the poſture of ſtooping* [1].

Another of them called *Thalaleus*, of a very bulky ſize, ſuſpended himſelf in the air, in a cage of a different kind, contrived by himſelf, and made ſo low and ſo ſtrait alſo, that it left him no more room, than to ſit with *his head perpetually bent down between his knees*; in which poſture, he had ſpent *ten years*, when *Theodoret* firſt ſaw him [2]. Yet all theſe ridiculous whims and extravagancies are conſidered by *Theodoret*, as *the ſuggeſtions of the holy Spirit* [3], and divine inventions, to baffle the artifices of the Devil; or ſo many *ladders*, as he tells us, *by*

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[1] Hiſtor. Religioſ. c. xxvii.

[2] Ibid. c. xxviii.

[3] Ἐγὼ δὲ τῆς θείας ἄνευ οἰκονομίας ταύτην πιστεύω γενέσθαι τὴν στάσιν. ib. p. 882. B.

which they mounted up to heaven [1]; and which were all confirmed by miracles, as a proof of the divine approbation.

Theſe were the wonder-workers, and theſe the miracles of the fifth century: the character of which Dr. *Chapman* ſumms up to this effect in the following articles.

1. That they were of a public nature, and performed in ſuch a manner, as left no room for deluſion.

2. That they were attended with beneficial effects, which could not poſſibly have gained credit, unleſs the ſtrongeſt evidence of ſenſe had proved them to be true.

3. That the end of them was not to confirm any idle errors or ſuperſtitions, but purely to advance the glory of truth and virtue.

4. That the accounts of them are given by men of unqueſtionable integrity, piety, and learning, who were eye-witneſſes of many of the facts, and declare in the moſt ſolemn manner, that they knew them to be true.

5. That they were far from being vain and unneceſſary, ſo as to render them doubtful to after ages — but were atteſted by the ſtrongeſt moral evidence, equal to that, by which moſt of the antient miracles are ſupported.

6. That they are incapable of giving any countenance to the fabulous pretences of the Papiſts: and that a proteſtant of common capa-

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[1] Καὶ τῆς εὐσεβείας οἱ πολλὰς ϗ διαφόρους ἐμηχανήσαντο τρόφιμοι τῆς εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀνόδου κλίμακας. Ib. p. 889. A

city will diſcern as much difference between them and the Popiſh miracles, as between gold and braſs, between light and darkneſs [1].

Yet from the ſhort ſpecimen of theſe miracles already given, and much more, from a full liſt of them, which, if it were required, may hereafter be given, the very contrary character of them, I am perſuaded, will appear to be the true one, to all unprejudiced readers, in every one of thoſe articles.

1. That they were all of ſuch a nature, and performed in ſuch a manner, as would neceſſarily inject a ſuſpicion of fraud and deluſion.

2. That the cures and beneficial effects of them, were either falſe, or imaginary, or accidental.

3. That they tend to confirm the idleſt of all errors and ſuperſtitions.

4. That the integrity of the witneſſes is either highly queſtionable, or their credulity at leaſt ſo groſs, as to render them unworthy of any credit.

5. That they were not onely vain and unneceſſary, but generally ſpeaking, ſo trifling alſo, as to excite nothing but contempt.

And laſtly, that the belief and defence of them, are the onely means in the world, that can poſſibly ſupport, or that does in fact give any ſort of countenance, to the modern impoſtures in the Romiſh Church.

Then as to the Monks alſo, who are ſaid to have wrought thoſe miracles, the Doctor is not leſs zealous in defending and extolling all their extravagances. He declares, "that they were "intended for the beſt and moſt excellent pur-"poſes [1]. That all the friends to Chriſtiani-"ty muſt think, that in their voluntary auſte-"rities, they ſhewed ſuch prudence, virtue, and "greatneſs of mind, as deſerve the higheſt en-"comiums of poſterity [2]. And that the an-"cient Monaſteries were very different from the "modern; quite remote from the corruptions "of Popery, and deſerving the approbation of "the ſtricteſt Proteſtants [3]." Yet for my own part, notwithſtanding all his panegyric on thoſe primitive Monks and monaſteries, I ſhall not ſcruple to own, 1ſt, That I look upon the whole inſtitution of monkery, from what age or what Saint ſoever it drew its origin, to be contrary not onely to the principles of the Goſpel, but to the intereſts of all civil ſociety; and the chief ſource of all the corruptions, which have ever ſince infeſted the Chriſtian Church. 2dly, That by all, which I have ever read of the old, and have ſeen of the modern Monks, I take the preference to be clearly due to the laſt, as having a more regular diſcipline, more good learning, and leſs ſuperſtition among them, than the firſt [4].

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[1] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 175, &c.

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[1] Ibid. p. 162.

[2] Ibid. p. 165.

[3] Ibid. p. 180, 181.

[4] Sir *Iſaac Newton* has ſhewn, that the Monks are the ſpawn and genuine offſpring of thoſe Heretics, who, in the ſecond and third centuries, affected an extraordinary ſtrictneſs of life; forbidding to marry, and to eat the fleſh of animals; and prac-

Before we take leave of this ſubject, I ſhall juſt add a word or two concerning the character of *Theodoret* himſelf, to whoſe teſtimony Dr. *Chapman* pays ſo extraordinary a regard, and whoſe authority he declares to be deciſive in the caſe before us. The learned Monſ. *Du Pin*, in his account of him, extracted from his writings, ſays, " that he was born at *Antioch*, " A. D. 386, that his birth was accompanied " by miracles, both before and after it, which

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tiſing many abſurd auſterities of faſtings, and watchings, which they injoined as neceſſary to all Chriſtians; whoſe doctrines and practices were rejected and condemned by all the Churches of thoſe ages. But certain Enthuſiaſts, near the beginning of the fourth century, poſſeſſed with the ſame principles, yet with ſome little refinement and correction of them, retired into the deſerts, where they ſpent their lives with an high reputation of ſanctity, in exerciſes of devotion and divine contemplation; not impoſing the ſame ſeverities on all, as their predeceſſors, the Heretics had done, but on thoſe onely, who voluntarily preferred the ſame monaſtic life. Theſe therefore began to be highly reverenced, and before the end of the fourth century, increaſed ſo faſt, that they overflowed both the Greek and the Latin Church like a torrent: eſpecially when *Conſtantin* the Great profeſſed to eſteem and honor them above all Chriſtians; being perſuaded, as *Euſebius* tells us, *that God did ſurely dwell in thoſe ſouls, who had devoted themſelves entirely to his ſervice.* In *Ægypt* therefore, where this enthuſiaſm principally reigned, a third part of the people are ſaid to have betaken themſelves to the deſerts: whence they ſoon ſpread themſelves through the Chriſtian world; and were the ringleaders in eſtabliſhing *the worſhip of Saints, and reliques,* and all thoſe other Superſtitions, with which the fourth, and all ſucceeding centuries, ever after abounded. Obſervat. on the Proph. of Dan. par. i. c. 13.

" he himſelf relates in his religious hiſtory: " that, *if we may believe him*, his mother was " healed of an incurable diſeaſe in her eye, by " one *Peter* a Monk: that, upon the prayers of " another Monk, called *Macedonius*, God grant- " ed her to conceive a ſon, after thirteen years " of barrenneſs, and to bring him ſafely into the " world: that by the prayers of the firſt of thoſe " Monks, *Peter*, ſhe was preſerved alſo from " death after her delivery: and that her huſ- " band and her ſon had often felt the effects of " *Peter's* virtue and ſanctity, and were cured of " their diſtempers, by touching onely his gir- " dle [1]."

This account, I ſay, is drawn from *Theodoret* himſelf; whence we learn, that he was nurſed and trained in all the bigotry and ſuperſtition, with which that age abounded: taught from his very cradle, to venerate Monks and their miracles: and made to believe, with the firſt knowledge which he received, that he owed his very exiſtence to the efficacy of their prayers. He tells us, " that his mother ſent him once every " week to beg the bleſſing of the Monk *Peter*; " and that he went as often alſo to receive the in- " ſtructions and benediction of the other Monk, " *Macedonius*; who never failed to remind him, " of the great pains which it had coſt, to bring " him into the world, and how many nights he " had ſpent in praying to God for nothing elſe,

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[1] See Du Pin's account of Theodoret, Vol. iv. p. 55.

" but his birth [1]." And as *Theodoret* is ſaid to have been very tenacious of the principles, which he had once imbibed [2], ſo it was his conſtant practice, through his whole life, to viſit the cells and habitations of all the celebrated Monks of thoſe times; with whoſe lives and miracles he has filled his *religious hiſtory*; from which I ſhall here tranſcribe a ſtory or two, out of the great number which he has recorded, of the ſame ſort, and of his own knowledge, as a ſpecimen both of the judgement and the fidelity of the compiler.

In his life of the Monk *Peter*, he declares, " that his very garments wrought wonders, like " to thoſe of St. *Paul*: which I do not mention, " ſays he, by way of hyperbole, but with the " teſtimony of truth for what I am ſaying. For " his girdle made of coarſe linen, being very " broad and long, he cut it into two parts, with " the one of which he girded his own loins, and " mine with the other. This laſt my mother " has often applied to me and to my Father, " when we were ſick, and driven away our diſtempers by it; and made uſe of it alſo herſelf, as a remedy for her own health. Many " of our acquaintance, who knew this, frequently borrowed the girdle, for the ſervice of " other ſick people, and always found the ſame

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[1] Vid. Theodor. Hiſt. Religioſ. c. ix. p. 821. E. it. c. xiii. p. 840. D. 839. D.

[2] Animo erat excelſo & elato; ſententiæ, quam ſemel imbiberat, tenaciſſimus, injuriarum & contradictionum haud ſatis patiens, &c. Cave Hiſt. Litt. de Theodorit. T. i. p. 406.

"good effects of its virtue: till a certain perſon, who borrowed it, ungrateful to his benefactors, never reſtored it, and ſo we were deprived of the benefit of this gift [1]."

In the life of another Monk, called *James*, he tells this ſtory, "that the reliques of ſome of "the ancient *Patriarchs*, *Prophets*, and *Apoſtles*, "were brought to him in a cheſt from *Phœnicia* "and *Palæſtine*, and received by a public proceſſion of all the orders of the Clergy and the "Laity. But the Monk *James* did not think "fit to aſſiſt at this ſolemnity, having conceived "ſome doubts, it ſeems, whether the reliques, "ſaid to be *John Baptiſt's*, were really ſo or "not. Upon which, in the night following, "as he was praying, there appeared to him a "certain perſon cloathed in white, and demanded of him *why he did not come out to meet* "*them?* and when *James* aſked who they were, "of whom he ſpake, he replied, thoſe who "came the other day from *Phœnicia* and *Palæſtine*. The next night alſo the ſame perſon "appeared to him again; and in order to remove all his ſcruples, brought along with "him St. *John Baptiſt*, and the *Patriarch Joſeph*, "who were ſeverally preſented to him, and held "diſcourſe with him on the ſubject of their reliques [2]." With theſe ſtories, I ſhall leave it to the reader to determine, whether a writer of this turn and character can reaſonably be thought unprejudiced, and of an authority unconteſtable, or worthy indeed of any credit at all, where the honor of Monks, and the reality of their miracles, are the points in quæſtion.

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[1] Hiſt. Relig. c. ix. p. 826. B.

[2] Ibid. c. xxi. p. 862. D.

The ſame Monſ. *Du Pin*, after he has given us an abſtract of *Theodoret's religious hiſtory*, adds the following reflection: "this hiſtory contains many things remarkable, concerning the diſcipline "of this time. By it we ſee, that great honor "was given to the Saints; that they were in"voked; that men expected to be helped by "their prayers; that their reliques were ſought "after with great earneſtneſs; that people be"lieved very eaſily in them; attributed great "virtue and many miracles to them; and were "very credulous, &c." [1]. But though the whole turn and purpoſe of *Theodoret's ſacred Hiſtory*, tends to ſtrengthen the intereſt of the Romiſh, and to hurt the credit of the Proteſtant cauſe; by celebrating the forged miracles of *Monks, and Saints, and reliques, and holy water, and ſacred oil*, it is curious to obſerve, with what a different temper the Popiſh writer, Monſ. *Du Pin*, and the Proteſtant writer, Dr. *Chapman*, have each expreſſed themſelves on the ſubject of his teſtimony. The Papiſt, candidly intimating his doubts, ſays, *if we may believe* Theodoret, ſuch and ſuch miracles were peformed. The Proteſtant, on the contrary, contemning all doubts, declares, *that we muſt believe him, that his evidence is unconteſtable, that to reject it,*

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[1] See Du Pin, ibid. p. 65.

is to deſtroy the faith of hiſtory [1]. The fortunes of theſe two writers were as different alſo as their principles: the candor of the Papiſt being thought too favorable to Proteſtantiſm, was cenſured and diſgraced by the Popiſh Biſhops; the zeal of the Proteſtant, tending directly to Popery, was extolled and rewarded by the Proteſtant Biſhops.

We have dwelt already ſo long on the miracles of the fifth century, that it muſt be needleſs to examine the particular merit of that miracle, which Dr. *Berriman* has ſo accurately defended. I ſhall employ therefore but a very few words upon it. The ſtory is this; “ *Hunneric the Vandal*, a Chriſtian Prince of the *Arian hereſy*, in “ his perſecution of the orthodox party in *Africa*, ordered the tongues of a certain ſociety “ of them to be cut out to the roots: but by a “ ſurprizing inſtance of God's good Provi- “ dence, they were enabled to ſpeak articulately “ and diſtinctly without their tongues; and ſo “ continuing to make open profeſſion of the “ ſame doctrine, they became not onely the “ preachers, but living witneſſes of its truth; “ and a perpetual rebuke to the *Arian* fac- “ tion [2].” This miracle is atteſted by ſeveral contemporary writers, who affirm, that they had ſeen and heard ſome of thoſe Confeſſors, *ſpeaking diſtinctly, after they had loſt their tongues.*

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[1] *If we may not admit ſuch evidence as this, in proof of a matter of fact, I am afraid, we muſt ſhake the evidence of all human teſtimony, and believe nothing but what we ſee, feel, and know ourſelves.* Miſcel. Tracts, p. 167. it. p. 174, &c.

[2] See Berrim. Hiſtoric. Account of the Trinitar. Controv. p. 327, &c. and Dr. Chapm. Miſcel. Tracts, p. 174.

Now it may not improbably be ſuppoſed on this occaſion, that though their tongues were ordered to be cut to the roots, and are ſaid to have been ſo cut, yet the ſentence might not be ſo ſtrictly executed, as not to leave, in ſome of them, ſuch a ſhare of that organ, as was ſufficient, in a tolerable degree, for the uſe of ſpeech. It is remarkable alſo, that two of this company are ſaid to have utterly loſt the faculty of ſpeaking; who had been deprived perhaps of their entire tongues: for though this be aſcribed to the peculiar judgement of God, for a puniſhment of the immoralities, of which they were afterwards guilty, yet that ſeems to be a forced and improbable ſolution of the matter. We are told likewiſe, that another of theſe Confeſſors, *who had been dumb from his birth, yet by loſing his tongue with the reſt, acquired alſo the uſe of ſpeech*; which is a circumſtance ſo ſingular and extraordinary, that it carries with it a ſuſpicion of art and contrivance, to enhance the luſtre of the miracle.

But to come ſtill more cloſe to the point. If we ſhould allow after all, that the tongues of theſe Confeſſors were cut away to the very roots, what will the learned Doctor ſay, if this boaſted miracle, which he ſo ſtrenuouſly defends, ſhould be found at laſt to be no miracle at all? The tongue indeed has generally been conſidered, as abſolutely neceſſary to the uſe of ſpeech: ſo that to hear men talk without it, might eaſily paſs for a miracle, in that credulous age; eſpecially, when it gave ſo illuſtrious a confirmation to the orthodox faith, and ſo ſignal an overthrow to the *Arian Hereſy*. Yet the opportunities of examining the truth of the caſe by experiment, have been ſo rare in the world, that there was always room to doubt, whether there was any thing miraculous in it or not. But we have an inſtance in the preſent century, indiſputably atteſted, and publiſhed about thirty years ago, which clears up all our doubts, and entirely decides the quæſtion. I mean the caſe *of a Girl, born without a tongue, who yet talked as diſtinctly and eaſily, as if ſhe had enjoyed the full benefit of that organ:* a particular account of which is given, in *the memoires of the Academy of Sciences at* Paris, drawn up by an eminent Phyſician, who had carefully examined the mouth of the Girl, and all the ſeveral parts of it, in order to diſcover, by what means her ſpeech was performed without the help of a tongue: which he has there explaned with great ſkill and accuracy. In the ſame account he refers us likewiſe to another inſtance, publiſhed about eighty years before, by *a Surgeon of Saumur*, of a Boy, *who at the age of eight or nine years, loſt his tongue by a gangrene, or ulcer, occaſioned by the ſmall pox, yet retained the faculty of ſpeaking*, in the ſame manner as the Girl [1].

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[1] Memoires de l'Acad. des Scienc. Ann. 1718, p. 6.

Let our Doctor then defend this miracle with all the power of his zeal and learning: let him urge the teſtimonies of *Senators, Chancellors, Biſhops, Archbiſhops, and Popes*; of perſons, *who had too much learning and judgement*, he ſays, *to be deceived in ſo important a fact, though they lived an hundred years after it*; of *Æneas* alſo of *Gaza, who opened their very mouths*, as he tells us, *to make his obſervations with more exactneſs*[1]. Yet the humble teſtimony of this ſingle Phyſician, grounded on real experiment, will overturn at once all his pompous liſt of dignified authorities, and convince every man of judgement, that this pretended miracle, like all the other fictions, which have been impoſed upon the world, under that character, owed its whole credit to our ignorance of the powers of nature.

In ſhort; when we reflect on the corrupt and degenerate ſtate of the Church, in the end of the fourth century, allowed by the moſt diligent inquirers into Antiquity; and that this age was the pattern to all that ſucceeded it; in which the ſame corruptions were not onely practiſed, but, agreeably to the nature of all corruption, carried ſtill to a greater exceſs, and improved from bad to worſe, down to the time of the Reformation, we may ſafely conclude, without weighing the particular ſcruples which may ariſe upon each ſingle miracle, that they were all, in the groſs, of the ſame claſs and ſpecies, the mere effects of fraud and impoſture.

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[1] See Berrim. ibid.

For we can hardly dip into any part of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, of what age ſoever, without being ſhocked by the atteſtation of ſeveral, which from the mere incredibility of them, appear at firſt ſight to be fabulous. This is confeſſed on all ſides, even by the warmeſt defenders of the Primitive Fathers, and cannot be accounted for in any other way, than by aſcribing it to the experience, which thoſe Fathers had, of the blind credulity and ſuperſtition of the ages in which they lived, and which had been trained by them, to conſider *the impoſſibility of a thing, as an argument for the belief of it* [1]. But in whatever light we contemplate theſe ſtories, whether as believed, or as forged by them, or as affirmed onely, and not believed, it neceſſarily deſtroys their credit in all other miraculous relations whatſoever. Yet it is ſurprizing to ſee, with what eaſe the Advocates of theſe miracles overlook, and contemn all reflections of this kind, and think it ſufficient to tell us, that *the Fathers, though honeſt, were apt to be very credulous:* for with theſe diſputants, credulity, it ſeems, how groſs ſoever, caſts not the leaſt ſlur upon their teſtimony; which, in all caſes, where it does not confute itſelf by its own extravagance,

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[1] *Tertullian*, diſputing againſt certain Heretics, who denied the reality of Chriſt's human nature, reaſons thus; "The Son of God was crucified: it is no ſhame to own it, becauſe it is a thing "to be aſhamed of. The Son "of God died: it is wholly "credible, becauſe it is abſurd. When buried, he roſe "again to life: it is certain, "becauſe it is impoſſible." De Carne Chriſti, § 5.

gance, they maintain to be convincing and deciſive, and ſuperior to all ſuſpicion. Whereas the ſole inference, which reaſon would teach us to draw from an atteſtation of miracles, ſo conſpicuouſly fabulous, is, that the ſame witneſſes are not to be truſted in any; as being either incapable, from a weakneſs of judgement of diſcerning the truth and probability of things, or determined by craft and fraud, to defend every thing that was uſeful to them. In a word, in all inquiries of this nature, we may take it for a certain rule, that thoſe, who are conſcious of the power of working true miracles, can never be tempted either to invent, or to propagate any, which are falſe; becauſe the detection of any one, would taint the credit of all the reſt, and defeat the end propoſed by them. But Impoſtors are naturally drawn, by a long courſe of ſucceſs, into a ſecurity, which puts them off their guard, and tempts them gradually, out of mere wantonneſs, and contempt of thoſe, whom they had ſo frequently deluded, to ſtretch their frauds beyond the bounds of probability, till by repeated acts of this kind, they tire the patience of the moſt credulous, and expoſe their tricks to the ſcorn even of the populace.

I have now thrown together all, which I had collected for the ſupport of my argument, or as much at leaſt, as I thought ſufficient to illuſtrate the real ſtate of the primitive miracles: and if we caſt up the ſumm of all that boaſted evidence, which the *unanimity of the Fathers*, *the tradition* *of the Catholic Church, and the faith of hiſtory* have produced at laſt on the other ſide, towards the confirmation of the ſaid miracles, we ſhall find the whole, to amount in reality to no proof at all. For to run over them all again in ſhort:

The gift *of raiſing the dead*, is affirmed onely by the ſingle authority of *Irenæus*, Biſhop of *Lyons*; and was either not known, or not believed at leaſt, in the very ſame age, by another Biſhop, full as venerable, *Theophilus* of *Antioch*. The *gift of tongues*, which reſts likewiſe on the ſingle teſtimony of the ſame *Irenæus*; is confuted even by himſelf, who complains of his own want of it, in the very work of propagating the Goſpel. The *gift of expounding the Scriptures*, which is reckoned commonly with the reſt, and clamed in particular by *Juſtin Martyr*, is allowed, to have had no ſubſiſtence at all, in any age, or any writer of the primitive Church. The *gift of caſting out Devils*, the moſt celebrated of them all, is reduced to nothing, by the accounts even of the Antients themſelves, which plainly teſtify, that it had no effect in many caſes, and could not work a perfect cure in any. And as to other diſeaſes, where oil eſpecially was applied, they might probably enough be cured without a miracle; or by the ſame arts, with which the ſame cures were performed among the Heathens: which, though the undoubted effects of fraud, were yet managed ſo dextrouſly, as to be conſtantly aſcribed by the Chriſtians to the power of Dæmons. Laſtly, *The gift of Prophetic viſions and trances*, was of a kind, which could not eaſily be proved to the ſatisfaction of any; was of no ſervice therefore to the propagation of the Goſpel, or the conviction of unbelievers; being wholly exerciſed among the Chriſtians themſelves: and owing its chief credit to Heretics and Enthuſiaſts; and always ſuſpected by the ſober and judicious: ſo that, after floriſhing for a while through a viſionary generation or two, it preſently after fell into utter contempt.

This then being the real ſtate of the miracles of the primitive Church, I freely commit them once more to the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, and the *Stebbings*; to defend and enjoy them, as much as they pleaſe; happy without doubt, in this ſceptical age, to find themſelves bleſſed with that heroic faith, which can remove mountains, and beat down every obſtacle, which ſenſe or reaſon, or fact can poſſibly oppoſe to it. Dr. *Chapman* has declared beforehand, *that whenever my larger work ſhould appear, the primitive Fathers would find greater friends to their memory, and abler advocates to their cauſe, than I would wiſh to exiſt* [1]. That time is now come; and thoſe abler Advocates expected: but let them appear when they will, I am ſo far from grudging their help to the Fathers, that I wiſh them the ableſt, which Popery itſelf can afford: for Proteſtantiſm, I am ſure, can ſupply none, whom they would chuſe to retain in their cauſe; none, who can defend them, without contradicting their own profeſſion, and diſgracing their own character; or produce any thing, but what deſerves to be laughed at, rather than anſwered. I muſt however except one, who acts indeed with a better grace and more conſiſtency: for when I had treated him by miſtake, as *a Proteſtant*, he flatly diſowns the name, and calls himſelf a *Catholick Chriſtian* [1]; the ſame title, which a Popiſh writer had before aſſumed, in his remarks on my *Letter from* Rome; and what all theſe Advocates, who hang, as it were, between the two religions, affect to aſſume, that they may evade for a while the more invidious name of Papiſt.

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[1] See Jeſ. Cabal farther opened, p. 45.

V. All that remains, towards the final confirmation of my argument, is, to refute, as I promiſed, ſome of the moſt plauſible objections, which have been made to it by my Antagoniſts; and which, by humouring the prejudices and prepoſſeſſions of many pious Chriſtians, ſeem the moſt likely, to make an impreſſion to its diſadvantage.

§ 1. In the firſt place then; It is objected, that by the character, which I have given of the antient Fathers, *the authority of the books of the New Teſtament*, which were tranſmitted to us through their hands, will be rendered *precarious and uncertain.*

To which I anſwer; that the objection is trifling and groundleſs, and that the authority of thoſe books does not depend upon the faith of the Fathers, or of any particular ſet of men, but on the general credit and reception which they found, not onely in all the Churches, but with all the private Chriſtians of thoſe ages, who were able to purchaſe copies of them: among whom, though it might perhaps be the deſire of a few to corrupt, yet it was the common intereſt of all, to preſerve, and of none, to deſtroy them. And we find accordingly, that they were guarded by all with the ſtricteſt care, ſo as to be conceled from the knowledge and ſearch of their heathen adverſaries, who alone were deſirous to extirpate them. After ſuch a publication therefore, and wide diſperſion of them from their very origin, it is hardly poſſible, that they ſhould either be corrupted, or ſuppreſſed, or counterfeited by a few, of what character or abilities ſoever; or that, according to the natural courſe of things, they ſhould not be handed down from age to age, in the ſame manner, with the works of all the other antient writers of *Greece* and *Rome*, which, though tranſmitted through the hands of many profligate and faithleſs generations of men, yet have ſuffered no diminution of their credit on that account: for though in every age there were ſeveral perhaps, who, from crafty and ſelfiſh motives, might be diſpoſed to deprave, or even to ſuppreſs ſome particular books, yet their malice could reach onely to a few copies, and would be reſtrained therefore from the attempt, or corrected at leaſt after the attempt by the greater number of the ſame books, which were out of their reach, and remained ſtill incorrupt. But beſides all this, there were ſome circumſtances peculiar to the books of the New Teſtament which inſured the preſervation of them more effectually, than of any other antient books whatſoever; the divinity of their character; and the religious regard, which was paid to them by all the ſects and parties of Chriſtians; and above all, the mutual jealouſies of thoſe very parties, which were perpetually watching over each other, leſt any of them ſhould corrupt the ſources of that pure doctrine, which they all profeſſed to teach and to deduce from the ſame books. Let the craft therefore of the antient Fathers be as great, as we can ſuppoſe it to be: let it be capable of adding ſome of their own forgeries for a while to the Canon of Scripture; yet it was not in the power of any craft, to impoſe ſpurious pieces, in the room of thoſe genuin ones, which were actually depoſited in all Churches, and preſerved with the utmoſt reverence, in the hands of ſo many private Chriſtians.

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[1] See Apologetic. Epiſt. p. 27, 28.

But I may go a ſtep farther, and venture to declare; that if we ſhould allow the objection to be true, it cannot in any manner hurt my argument: for if it be natural and neceſſary, that the craft and credulity of witneſſes ſhould always detract from the credit of their teſtimony; who can help it? or on what is the conſequence to be charged, but on that nature and conſtitution of things, from which it flows? or if the authority of any books be really weakened, by the character which I have given of the Fathers, will it follow from thence, that the character muſt neceſſarily be falſe, and that the Fathers were neither crafty nor credulous? that ſurely can never be pretended; becauſe the craft and credulity which are charged upon them muſt be determined by another ſort of evidence; not by conſequences, but by facts; and if the charge be confirmed by theſe, it muſt be admitted as true, how far ſoever the conſequences may reach.

§ 2. It has been alledged, "that all ſuſpicion "of fraud in the caſe of the primitive miracles "ſeems to be precluded, by that public appeal "and challenge which the Chriſtian Apologiſts "make to their enemies the Heathens, to come "and ſee with their own eyes the reality of the "facts which they atteſt." But this objection, though it may ſeem plauſible indeed to a common reader, yet to all, who are acquainted with the condition of the Chriſtians in thoſe days, and the difficulty of making their Apologies known to the world, will be found to have no real weight in it. The Goſpel indeed ſoon began to make a conſiderable progreſs among the vulgar, and to gain ſome few alſo of a more diſtinguiſhed rank, yet continued to be held in ſuch contempt by the generality of the better ſort, through the three firſt centuries, that they ſcarce ever thought it worth while to make any enquiry about it, or to examine the merit of its pretenſions. The principal writers of *Rome*, who make any mention of the Chriſtians, about the Time of *Trajan*, plainly ſhew that they knew / lc nothing more of them, or their religion than what they had picked up, as it were, by chance, from the groſs miſrepreſentation of common fame, and ſpeak of them accordingly, as *a ſet of deſpicable, ſtubborn, and even wicked Enthuſiaſts.*

Suetonius calls them, *a race of men of a new and miſchievous ſuperſtition* [1]. And *Tacitus*, deſcribing the horrible tortures, which they ſuffered under *Nero*, for the pretended crime of burning the City of *Rome*, ſays; " That they were deteſted for their flagitious practices; poſſeſſed " with an abominable ſuperſtition; and condemned, not ſo much for their ſuppoſed crime " of ſetting fire to the City, as for the hatred of " all mankind: and though they deſerved the " moſt exemplary puniſhments, yet it raiſed " ſome pity towards them, to ſee them ſo miſerably deſtroyed, not on the account of the " public utility, but to ſatiate the cruelty of a " ſingle man [2]."

Pliny alſo, when he was the Governor of a Province, in which the Chriſtians were very numerous, and under an actual perſecution in the reign of *Trajan*, yet in his celebrated letter to that Emperor concerning them, declares;

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[1] Afflicti ſuppliciis Chriſtiani: genus hominum ſuperſtitionis novæ & maleficæ. In Ner. c. 16.

[2] Quos per flagitia inviſos, vulgus Chriſtianos appellabat — exitiabilis Superſtitio rurſus erumpebat — haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis, convicti—&c. Ann. l. xv. 44.

“ that he had never been preſent at any of their “ examinations, and did not ſo much as know, “ for what they were puniſhed, or how far they “ deſerved puniſhment: that by all the inqui“ ries which he had ſince made, he could not “ diſcover any practices among them, but what “ were harmleſs and innocent.—And nothing “ in ſhort, but a wretched and extravagant ſu“ perſtition, which had ſpread itſelf very wide, “ among perſons of both ſexes, of every age “ and condition; which might however be ſub“ dued by gentler methods; by moderating the “ rigor of the perſecution, and pardoning the “ penitent; by which lenity great numbers of “ them had already been recalled to their an“ cient worſhip [1].”

This is the whole account which we have of the Primitive Chriſtians, from the beſt Heathen writers, to the time of *Antoninus Pius:* in whoſe reign, and that of his Succeſſor, *M. Aurelius*, the ancient Apologies of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Melito*, and *Athenagoras*, were addreſſed to the Emperor and Senate of *Rome:* notwithſtanding which, their condition, generally ſpeaking, continued much the ſame through the following ages, till they were eſtabliſhed at laſt by the civil power: during all which time, they were conſtantly inſulted and calumniated by their Heathen Adverſaries, as a *ſtupid, credulous, impious ſect*; *the ſcum of mankind, and the prey of crafty Impoſtors:* calumnies, of which all the ancient Apologiſts complain, and take great pains to confute. *Tertullian* expoſtulates very warmly with the Heathen Magiſtrates, "that they would not give "themſelves the trouble, to make the leaſt in"quiry into their manners and doctrines; but "condemned them for the mere name, without "examination or trial; treating a Chriſtian of "courſe, as guilty of every crime; *as an enemy "of the Gods, Emperors, laws, cuſtoms, and even "of nature itſelf*——and what, ſays he, can be "more unjuſt than to hate, what you know no"thing of, even though it deſerved to be hat"ed[1]?" *Arnobius* and *Lactantius* make the ſame complaint near an hundred years later, in the beginning of the fourth century, that they were derided every where by the Gentiles, *as a ſenſeleſs, ſtupid race of blockheads and brutes, to whoſe impieties, all the calamities, which afflicted*

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[1] Cognitionibus de Chriſtianis interfui nunquam, ideo neſcio, quid aut quatenus aut puniri ſoleat, aut quæri, &c. Ep. l. x. 97.

N. B. Pliny ſays in this letter, that many of both ſexes, and of all ages, ranks, or orders of men, had embraced Chriſtianity. *Tertullian* alſo gives the ſame account about an hundred years later. [Apologet. i. ad Scapul. verſ. fin.] But it muſt be obſerved, that their accounts were given from the Provinces of *Bithynia* and *Africa*, where the dignity even of the moſt eminent was but very little conſidered or reſpected in the great republic of *Rome*.

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[1] Chriſtianum hominem, omnium Scelerum reum, Deorum, Imperatorum, legum, morum, naturæ totius inimicum exiſtimas, &c. Apol. § 1, 2.—Ἐφ' ἡμῶν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα ὡς ἔλεγχον λαμβάνετε, &c. Vid. Juſt. Mart. apol. i. p. 8.

the ſeveral countries where they lived, were conſtantly imputed [1].

In theſe circumſtances, it cannot be imagined, that men of figure and fortunes would pay any attention to the Apologies or writings of a ſect, ſo utterly deſpiſed; eſpecially, when on the one hand there was no elegance of ſtyle or compoſition, to invite them to read; and on the other, all the diſcouragements which the Government could give, to deter them from reading. Much leſs can we believe, that the Emperor and Senate of *Rome*, ſhould take any notice of thoſe Apologies, or even know indeed, that any ſuch were addreſſed to them. For ſhould the like caſe happen in our own days, that any Methodiſt, Moravian, or French Prophet, ſhould publiſh an apology for his brethren, addreſſed to the King and the Parliament, is it not wholly improbable, that the Government would pay any regard to it, or take it at all into their conſideration? How can it then be ſuppoſed, that the Emperor and Senate of

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[1] Nos hebetes, ſtolidi, obtuſi pronuntiamur & bruti, ſed peſtilentias, inquiunt, & ſiccitates, bella, frugum inopiam—reſque alias noxias—Dii nobis important injuriis veſtris, atque offenſionibus exaſperati — Arnob. l. i. p. 2, 7.

Cur igitur pro ſtultis, vanis ineptis habemur? Lact. l. iv. c. 13. Illud quoque ortum eſt vulgare proverbium; *pluvia deficit*, ſit cauſa Chriſtiani. Aug. Civ. D. l. ii. iii.

Si Tiberis aſcendit ad mœnia; ſi Nilus non aſcendit in arva; ſi cœlum ſtetit; terra movit; ſi fames; ſi lues; ſtatim, Chriſtianos ad Leonem. Tertull. Apol. 40.

Rome, who had a worſe opinion of the ancient Chriſtians than we of our modern Fanatics, and inſtead of tolerating, were uſing all methods to deſtroy them, would give themſelves the trouble to read, or to conſider the merit of their writings?

We muſt add to all this, the great difficulty of publiſhing books, or of making them known to the world in thoſe ages. The caſe, which we now find, in providing and diſperſing, what number of copies we pleaſe, by the opportunity of the preſs, makes us apt to imagine, without conſidering the matter, that the publication of books was the ſame eaſy affair in all former times as in the preſent. But the caſe was quite different. For when there were no books in the world, but what were written out by hand, with great labor and expence, the method of publiſhing them was neceſſarily very ſlow, and the price very dear; ſo that the rich onely and curious would be diſpoſed, or able to purchaſe them; and to ſuch alſo, it was often difficult to procure them, or to know even where they were to be bought.

In the Epiſtle of the Church of *Smyrna*, mentioned above, concerning the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, there is a paſſage or two, which will help to confirm what I am now aſſerting. For towards the end of it, the *Philadelphians*, to whom it is addreſſed, are deſired, as ſoon as they have informed themſelves of the contents, *to ſend it forward to all the other brethren*, who lived more remote, or beyond *Philadelphia*, that they alſo might read it and glorify God. The note likewiſe, which is annexed to the end of the Epiſtle, declares, " that the copy of this moſt " valued piece, which had been tranſcribed " from the book of *Irenæus*, had lain buried and " unknown at *Corinth* for ſeveral ages, almoſt " deſtroyed by time, and in danger of being loſt " to the world, till it was diſcovered by a reve- " lation from *Polycarp* himſelf, made to one " *Pionius*," from whoſe tranſcript, all the copies of it now extant are derived [1]. Theſe paſſages, I ſay, plainly intimate, how difficult it muſt have been to the Chriſtians of thoſe days, to provide ſuch books as were wanted even for their own uſe, and much more to diſperſe ſuch a number of them, as was ſufficient for the information of the public.

Since this then was the condition of publiſhing books in thoſe primitive ages, in which the Chriſtians were neither able to bear the expence of copying, nor the Heathens diſpoſed to buy them, there is great reaſon to believe, that their Apologies, how gravely ſoever addreſſed to Emperors and Senates, lay conceled and unknown to the public for many years, in a few private hands, and among the faithful onely; eſpecially, when the publication of them was not onely difficult and expenſive, but ſo criminal alſo, as to expoſe them often to danger, and even to capital puniſhment; and when the books themſelves, as oft as they were found by the magiſtrate, inſtead of being read, were generally ordered to be burnt [1].

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[1] Μαθόντες οὖν ταῦτα, ϗ τοῖς ἐπέκεινα ἀδελφοῖς τὴν ἐπιστολὴν διαπέμψατε, ἵνα ϗ ἐκεῖνοι δοξάζωσι τὸν κύριον. § XX. it. XXIII. XXIV.

§ 3. It is urged againſt me, "that no ſuſpicion of craft can reaſonably be entertained againſt perſons of ſo exalted a piety, who expoſed themſelves to perſecution, and even to Martyrdom, in confirmation of the truth of what they taught." But this likewiſe will appear to have as little ſolidity in it as the former. For all, who are converſant with hiſtory, know, that nothing gives ſo invincible a prejudice, and ſo ſtrong a biaſs to the mind of man, as religious zeal in favor of every thing, that is thought uſeful to the object which excites it. And the ſeveral facts, which I have already ſtated, will inable us to judge, in what manner the extraordinary zeal of thoſe ancients may be preſumed to have operated in the caſe now in quæſtion. I ſhall ſay nothing more therefore on that head: but ſince ſome of thoſe Fathers, to whoſe teſtimony I have chiefly appealed, as *Papias*, *Juſtin*, *Irenæus*, *Cyprian*, &c. were not onely perſons of the greateſt piety and zeal, but ſaid to have been Martyrs alſo for the faith of Chriſt; it may be proper to add a reflection or two on the particular caſe of Martyrdom; in order to ſhew, that this venerable name made no real difference in the perſonal characters of men, nor ought to give any additional weight to the authority of a Chriſtian witneſs.

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[1] Καίπερ θανάτου ὁρισθέντος κατὰ τῶν διδασκόντων, ἢ ὅλως ὁμολογούντων τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἡμεῖς πανταχοῦ καὶ ἀσπαζόμεθα, καὶ διδάσκομεν· εἰ δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς ἐχθροὶ ἐντεύξεσθε τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις, οὐ πλέον τι δύνασθε—τοῦ φονεύειν. Juſt. M. Apol. i. p. 69.

Nam noſtra quidem ſcripta cur ignibus meruerunt dari? cur immaniter conventicula dirui? Arnold. l. iv. verſ. fin.

There were various motives of different kinds, as Mr. *Dodwell* has ſhewn, which would naturally induce the primitive Chriſtians, not onely to indure, but even to wiſh and aſpire to Martyrdom. He obſerves, "that among the "ancient *Jews*, the *Galilæans* were remarkable "for the obſtinacy of their temper, and a con-"tempt of death: whoſe example, he imagines, "might have ſome influence on thoſe firſt "Chriſtians, who drew their origin from that "country, and were conſtantly called *Galilæans*, "and charged with the ſame ſpirit of obſtinacy "by their adverſaries [1]." A character, which ſeems to be particularly verified in the Chriſtians of *Palæſtine*, concerning whom, *Tiberianus*, the Governor of *Syria*, ſends the following account to the Emperor *Trajan*.

"I am quite tired with puniſhing and de-"ſtroying the *Galilæans*, or thoſe of the ſect "called Chriſtians, according to your orders. "Yet they never ceaſe to profeſs voluntarily,

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[1] Poterat & Judæorum, præſertim *Galilæorum* obſtinata illa indoles in primorum Chriſtianorum patientia locum habere. Dodw. Diſſ. Cyprian. xii. 2.

“ what they are, and to offer themſelves to “ death. Wherefore I have labored by exhorta- “ tions and threats, to diſcourage them from “ daring to confeſs to me, that they are of that “ Sect. Yet in ſpite of all perſecution, they “ continue ſtill to do it. Be pleaſed therefore “ to let me know, what your Highneſs thinks “ proper to be done with them [1].”

Glory alſo, or reputation, was another great ſpur to Martyrdom: for by the principles of thoſe ages, nothing was eſteemed more glorious than the *crown of Martyrdom*, as it was called. There was an anniverſary feſtival inſtituted to the honor of each Martyr; in which their memories were celebrated by panegyrical orations, and a veneration, next to divine, paid to their reliques. In their priſons they were viſited by the Chriſtians of all ranks; proud to miniſter to them in the very loweſt offices, and to kiſs their chains: and if they happened to eſcape with life from their tortures, as they frequently did, their authority was ever after moſt highly reſpected; in the deciſion of all controverſies; in abſolving men from the ordinary diſcipline of the Church; in granting pardon to the lapſed Chriſtians; and reſtoring them to communion, on what terms they thought fit [2].

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[1] Vid. Tiberian. Epiſt. apud Coteler. Edit. Patr. Apoſtol. vol. ii. p. 181.

[2] Quis in carcerem ad oſculanda vincula Martyris reptare patietur? [Tertull. ad Uxor. ii. 4.] Quam pacem quidam in Eccleſia non habentes, a Martyribus in carcere exorare ſolebant. [Id.

But the principal incentive to Martyrdom, was the aſſurance, not onely of an immortality of glory, and happineſs in another world, in common with all other pious Chriſtians, but of extraordinary and diſtinguiſhed rewards, and a degree of happineſs, proportionable to the degree of their ſufferings. For while the ſouls of ordinary Chriſtians were to wait their doom in ſome intermediate ſtate; or paſs to their final bliſs through a purgation by fire, it was a general belief, that the Martyrs were admitted *to*

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ad Martyr. ii.] Vid. Dodw. Diſſert. Cyprian. xi. 9, 10.]

Sacrificia pro eis ſemper, ut meminiſtis, offerimus, quoties Martyrum paſſiones, & dies anniverſaria commemoratione celebramus. [Cypr. Ep. 34. it. 37.]

Mandant aliquid Martyres fieri? ſi juſta, ſi licita, ſi non contra ipſum Dominum, a Dei Sacerdote facienda ſunt. [Cypr. de Lapſis. p. 174.] Ut qui libellum a Martyribus acceperunt, & auxilio eorum adjuvari apud Dominum in delictis ſuis poſſunt, — cum pace a Martyribus promiſſa ad Dominum remittantur. [Id. Ep. 13, & 12.]

N. B. Euſebius, ſpeaking of the perſecution under *M. Aurelius* and *L. Verus*, ſays, "that thoſe, who were then racked and tortured for the confeſſion of their faith, were ſo humble, that they would not aſſume the title of Martyrs, nor ſuffer it to be given to them, declaring none to be worthy of that name, but thoſe who were made perfect by ſuffering death; and praying, that they alſo might arrive at that perfection." [Hiſt. Eccleſ. v. 2.] But we find a contrary practice in *Cyprian's* time, who freely gives the *title of Martyr* to all, who had indured torments for the faith of Chriſt. Which was ſo far from being rejected by them, that many, as he complains, were ſo puffed up with pride on that account, as to give great diſturbance to the peace and diſcipline of the Church. Vid. Epiſt. x, xi, xii, xiii, &c.

the immediate fruition of Paradiſe, and that the fire of Martyrdom purged all their ſins away at once [1]. And the opinion likewiſe, which commonly prevailed in thoſe days, that this world was near to its end, made them the more eager ſtill to ſnatch that crown, which would entitle them to ſuch high privileges, ; give them a power with God, ſo as to procure benefits for others, and make them Aſſeſſors and Judges with Chriſt himſelf at the laſt day [2].

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[1] Sed & juſtos cum judicaverit, etiam igni eos examinabit, &c. Lact. VII. 21.

Nemo peregrinatus a corpore, ſtatim immoratur penes Dominum, niſi ex Martyrii prærogativa; paradiſo ſcilicet, non inferis diverſurus. Tertull. de Reſur. carn. 43.

Quis non — pati exoptat? ut Dei totam gratiam redimat; ut omnem veniam ab eo compenſatione ſanguinis ſui expediat? omnia enim huic operi delicta donantur. Id. Apologet. ad fin.

N. B. Cyprian, ſpeaking of the different ſtates of the lapſed Chriſtians, though reſtored afterwards to the Church by penance, and of the Martyrs, who had nobly ſuffered death or torments for the faith of Chriſt, ſays, "it "is one thing, to lie at mer"cy; another, to arrive at "glory; one thing, to be "thrown into priſon, and "not to be diſcharged, till "you have paid the utter"moſt farthing; another, to "receive the immediate re"ward of your faith and vir"tue: one thing, to be "cleanſed from your Sins by "a long courſe of torments, "and a purgation by fire; "another, to have all your "ſins wiped off at once by "martyrdom: in a word, "one thing to hang in ſuſ"penſe about your doom, in "the day of judgement; an"other, to be crowned direct"ly by the Lord." Ep. li. p. 71. ad fin.

[2] Αὐτοὶ τοίνυν οἱ θεῖοι Μάρτυρες παρ' ἡμῖν, οἱ νῦν τοῦ Χριστοῦ πάρεδροι, ϗ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ κοινωνοὶ, ϗ μέτοχοι τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. vi. c. 42.

There was another notion, diligently inculcated and generally believed at the ſame time, which was ſufficient of itſelf to efface all the terrors of Martyrdom, *viz.* that under all that dreadful apparatus of racks and fires, and the ſeeming atrocity of their tortures, the Martyrs were miraculouſly freed from all ſenſe of pain, nay, felt nothing but tranſports of joy, from the cruelty of their tormentors. All which is expreſly affirmed by many of the eccleſiaſtical writers. *The viſible aſſiſtance of heaven*, ſays Dr. Chapman, *relieving the pains of ſome*, *extinguiſhing them in others*, *and converting them into pleaſure and rapture in many—which facts*, he declares, *to be ſo well known*, *and ſo well atteſted*; *ſo plain and ſo indiſputable*, *that there was no occaſion for him to take the trouble of proving them* [1]. *Socrates*, the Hiſtorian, has furniſhed an inſtance of them in the caſe of one *Theodorus:* and the old Martyrologies, as they are publiſhed by the Romaniſts, and eſpecially *the Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas*, to which the Doctor refers us, for the indiſputable proof of true miracles, will ſupply us with many more [2]. This *Theodorus* was

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[1] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 156

[2] As appears beyond all diſpute from the acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*, &c. Ibid. p. 169.

N. B. It is ſtrange, that a Proteſtant Divine ſhould lay ſo much ſtreſs on theſe Acts, as to make them the unquæſtionable vouchers of true miracles: which, while they excite our compaſſion for the ſufferings, and our admiration of the courage of theſe two female Martyrs, yet ſhock and diſguſt us at the ſame time, to ſee all this virtue and fortitude derived, not was a young Chriſtian, of eminent zeal and piety, who is ſaid to have ſuffered the moſt cruel

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from the calm and ſober principles of the Goſpel, but from the impetuoſity of a wild and extravagant enthuſiaſm. Among many other inſtances of this, written by *Perpetua* herſelf, in her priſon, ſhe relates what follows: "That, as ſhe was praying with the reſt of her fellow martyrs, ſhe happened to mention, all of a ſudden, and to her own ſurprize, the name of *Dinocrates*, which had not come into her mind of a long time, till that very moment. It was the name of her brother, who died of a cancer in his face, when he was but ſeven years old. This renewed her grief for his unhappy caſe; and convinced her, that ſhe ought to pray for him, as being now held worthy to intercede for others: whereupon ſhe began to put up her prayers and ſighs for him to the Lord, and in that ſame night received this viſion: ſhe ſaw *Dinocrates* coming out of a dark place, in which there were many others with him, greatly tormented by heat and thirſt; with a ſordid and pale countenance, and the ſame wound in his face which he had when he died. There was a pool of water alſo in the place, but with a brink deeper than the ſtatue of the boy, who ſtretched himſelf out, as deſirous to drink, but was not able to reach the water. This grieved *Perpetua*, who, as ſoon as ſhe was awake, knew by this viſion that her brother was in an uneaſy ſtate: but being aſſured, that ſhe could relieve him by her prayers, ſhe continued to intercede day and night, with groans and tears, that his puniſhment might be remitted for her ſake. Upon which, ſhe ſhortly after received another viſion, when the place, which before was dark, appeared bright and ſhining; and *Dinocrates* was now quite clean, well dreſſed and refreſhed; and inſtead of the wound, with a ſcar onely in his face: and the brink of the pool was reduced to the heighth onely of his navel, whence he inſtantly drew water: on the brink alſo ſtood a vial full of water, out of which tortures by the command of the Emperor *Julian*; but after he was left for dead by his tor-

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"he began to drink, yet the water in it never failed: ſo that the boy, having now ſatisfied his thirſt, went away chearfully to play, as children uſually do; by which *Perpetua* underſtood, that her brother was removed from the place of his puniſhment."

The caſe of this infant *Dinocrates*, was alledged by an ancient writer, in a controverſy with St. *Auſtin*, as a proof, that baptiſm was not abſolutely neceſſary to an admiſſion into Paradiſe: to which St. *Auſtin* anſwers, "That though the boy was but ſeven years old, he might probably be baptized at that age, and after baptiſm be guilty of lying or denying Chriſt: or in the time of perſecution, might be drawn perhaps by his impious Father, who was an Heathen, into ſome act of Idolatry, for which he was doomed to a place of torments, till his pardon was obtained by the prayers of his Siſter, then going to die for Chriſt." [De Origin, anim. l. i. c. 10. & l. iii. c. 9.] From theſe and ſeveral other viſions of the ſame kind, which are related in the ſame Acts, the Romaniſts draw what they take to be a demonſtrative and experimental proof of every thing, which they teach with regard to the other world; *of an Hell, a Purgatory, a Limbus, or ſeparate place of Infants, and another Limbus of the Ancient Fathers, with a Paradiſe for the immediate reception of Martyrs: and that the dead may be relieved alſo from their pains by the prayers of the living.* [Vid. Ruinart. Acta Martyr. de SS. Perpet. & Felic. § VII & VIII, & notas Holſtenii & Poſſini.]

Such are the miracles, which Dr. *Chapman* affirms to be indiſputably proved by the Acts of *Perpetua* and *Felicitas*; and ſuch the doctrines, which are deduced from them: but tho' neither the enthuſiaſm nor the Popery, with which they abound, could check his Proteſtant zeal from aſcribing a divine authority to them, there is another circumſtance ſtill belonging to them, ſufficient, one would think, to have deſtroyed their whole credit with an Advocate of primitive and orthodox Antiquity: for the origimentors, was providentially preſerved and reſtored to life. “ *Ruffinus* happening to meet

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nal Collector and publiſher of them appears to have been one of thoſe Heretics and diſciples of *Montanus*, who gave ſo much diſturbance to the Church in the early ages. This is declared to be moſt certain by the learned *Valeſius*, though a Papiſt; and notwithſtanding the pains, which Mr. *Ruinart*, the Editor of the Martyrologies, takes, to confute that imputation, the truth of it ſeems to be unquæſtionable. *Valeſius*, indeed, like a good Catholic, deſires, *That this circumſtance may not detract, either from the authority of thoſe Acts, or the veneration due to thoſe holy Martyrs, and charges it as a piece of craft on the Montaniſts,* that they made uſe of theſe viſions, to ſupport the credit of their own dreams. But when we reflect on the enthuſiaſtic ſpirit of *Perpetua*, and with what a confidence ſhe relates her wonderful viſions and intercourſe with the Lord; and when we find her character and revelations mentioned with praiſe by *Tertullian*, then a *Montaniſt*, it is highly probable, that *Perpetua* alſo herſelf was tainted with the ſame Hereſy; and that St. *Auſtin* conſequently, as an eminent Critic has obſerved, was drawn by ſome falſe tradition concerning theſe Martyrs, to honour them as true Saints, when, in reality, they were Heretics. [Vid. Ittig. Diſſert. de Hæreſiarch. Sect. 2. c. xiii. § 28.]

From the ſame Acts we ſee likewiſe, as I have ſaid, how theſe primitive Martyrs went out to meet their cruel deaths with a firm perſuaſion, that they ſhould feel no pain from them. *Felicitas* was eight months gone with child, when their execution drew near, and being afraid, as her companions alſo were, that on the account of her pregnancy, ſhe ſhould be left by them alone in the way to their common hope; they all put up their joint prayers to heaven, three days before they ſuffered: upon which ſhe fell preſently into labor, and was delivered of a female child: but in the time of delivery, when ſhe expreſſed a ſharp ſenſe of the pains which ſhe felt; one of the ſervants of the priſon ſaid to her, *If you lament ſo much now, what will you do, when you are* "heavenly rewards? If it be glorious to worldly ſoldiers, after conquering an enemy, to return triumphant into their country, how much greater glory is it, after having vanquiſhed the Devil, to return triumphant into paradiſe, whence *Adam* was expelled, and there to erect trophies over that very enemy, who expelled him? To accompany God, when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies; to be placed at his ſide, when he ſits in judgement; to be made coheirs with Chriſt; equal with Angels; and together with *the Apoſtles, Prophets, and Patriarchs,* to rejoice in the poſſeſſion of an heavenly kingdom? Theſe things you are to bear in your minds and memories. What perſecution can get the better of ſuch meditations? what torments be ſuperior to them [1]?"

Theſe principles and motives, I ſay, had ſuch force, as ſometimes to animate even bad men, to indure a Martyrdom. For the Heretics alſo had their Martyrs, as all hiſtory informs us, as well as the Orthodox; who yet in their common ſufferings and death, continued to teſtify their mutual averſion, *and to refuſe all com-*

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[1] Exhortat. ad Martyr. c. xii. This may ſerve as a ſpecimen of that *true, and noble, and genuin eloquence of* Cyprian, which, as Dr. *Marſhall*, the Tranſlator of his works, ſays, *reſembles an impetuous torrent, which carries away with it every thing it meets; ſince he was capable of raiſing what paſſions he pleaſed, and of perſuading us, to do whatever he had a mind to.* Pref. to his Tranſlation, p. 17.

" with him many years after, took occaſion to " aſk him, whether he had been ſenſible of any " very ſharp pains under the agony of his tor-" ture; to which he anſwered, that he had felt " but very little, and that a certain young perſon " ſtood by him all the time, wiping away the " ſweat which flowed from him, ſtrengthening " his mind, and filling him with delight rather " than torment, during his continuance on the " rack [1]."

Laſtly, we muſt add to theſe ſeveral motives, the ſcandal of flying from perſecution, and the infamy which attended the lapſed Chriſtians; ſo as to make life hardly ſupportable to thoſe, who, through fear of the rack and a cruel death, had been tempted to deny their faith, or guilty of any compliance with the idolatry of their perſecutors. All which topics, when diſplayed with art and eloquence by their ableſt Teachers, were ſufficient to inflame the multitude, to what pitch of zeal they pleaſed, ſo as to make them even provoke, and offer themſelves forwardly to the moſt dreadful torments. " Who is there, " ſays *Cyprian*, who would not ſtrive with all " his might, to arrive at ſo great a glory, to be " a friend of God; enter into preſent joy with " Chriſt; and after earthly torments receive

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thrown to the beaſts, which you deſpiſed, when you refuſed to ſacrifice? to which ſhe anſwered, *I now feel what I ſuffer; but then, another will be in me, who will feel for me, becauſe I am to ſuffer for him.* Vid. Act. ibid. § xv.

[1] Socrat. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 19. it Sozom. l. v. c. 20.

“ heavenly rewards? If it be glorious to worldly ſoldiers, after conquering an enemy, to return triumphant into their country, how much greater glory is it, after having vanquiſhed the Devil, to return triumphant into paradiſe, whence *Adam* was expelled, and there to erect trophies over that very enemy, who expelled him? To accompany God, when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies; to be placed at his ſide, when he ſits in judgement; to be made coheirs with Chriſt; equal with Angels; and together with *the Apoſtles, Prophets, and Patriarchs,* to rejoice in the poſſeſſion of an heavenly kingdom? Theſe things you are to bear in your minds and memories. What perſecution can get the better of ſuch meditations? what torments be ſuperior to them [1]?”

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munion with each other [1]. But by bad men, who became Martyrs, I do not mean ſuch onely as were called Heretics, for that name was often given, even to the beſt; but the proud, the contentious, the drunken, and the lewd, among the orthodox Martyrs themſelves: of all which kinds, there were many, as St. *Cyprian* complains, who, after they had nobly ſuſtained the trial of Martyrdom, and eſcaped with life from the torments of their perſecutors, yet by a petulant, factious, and profligate behaviour, gave great ſcandal and diſturbance to the diſcipline of the Church.

This is expreſly declared by *Cyprian* in ſeveral of his letters: in one of which, addreſſed to the whole body of the Confeſſors, after he has ſignified his joy, " That the greateſt part of them " were made the better by the honor of their " confeſſion, and preſerved their glory, by a " quiet and inoffenſive carriage, yet he had " been informed, he ſays, of others, who in" fected their ſociety, and diſgraced the lauda" ble name of Confeſſor by their evil converſa" tion: ſome of them being drunken and laſci" vious, ſome puffed up and ſwollen with pride; " while others, as he had heard with the utmoſt " grief, defiled their bodies, the temples of God, " ſanctified by their confeſſion, with the pro" miſcuous and infamous uſe of lewd wo-

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[1] Καὶ ἐπειδὰν οἱ ἐπὶ τὸ τῆς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν πίστεως μαρτύριον κληθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τύχωσι μετά τινων τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Φρυγῶν αἱρέσεως λεγομένων μαρτύρων, διαφέρονταί τε πρὸς

“ men [1].” In one of his letters alſo to the Clergy, he ſays, “ I am grieved, when I hear “ how ſome of them run about, wickedly and “ inſolently, ſpending their time in trifles, or in “ ſowing diſcord; and defiling the members of “ Chriſt, and which have already confeſſed “ Chriſt, by the unlawful uſe of women [2].” And in another treatiſe, where he is touching the ſame ſubject, “ Let no man wonder, ſays he, “ that ſome of the Confeſſors commit ſuch hor- “ rible and grievous ſins; for confeſſion does “ not ſecure them from the ſnares and tempta- “ tions of the Devil—— otherwiſe we ſhould “ never after ſee any frauds, and whoredoms. “ and adulteries, in Confeſſors, which I now “ groan and grieve to ſee in ſome of them [3].”

αὐτοὺς, ϗ μὴ κοινωνήσαντες αὐτοῖς τελειῶνται. Euſeb. Hiſt. l. v. c. 16. it. c. 18.

[1] Sed quoſdam audio inficere numerum veſtrum, & laudem præcipui nominis prava ſua converſatione deſtruere, &c. &c. Epiſt. vi.

[2] Doleo enim, quando audio quoſdam improbe & inſolenter diſcurrere, & ad ineptias vel diſcordias vacare: Chriſti membra & jam Chriſtum confeſſa, per concubitus illicitos inquinare. Ep. v. it. vii. 22, 24.

[3] De Unitat. Eccleſ. verſ. fin. p. 185.

N. B. The name of Martyr was given, as I have ſaid above, to all thoſe, who had ſuffered tortures for the public profeſſion of their faith before the Magiſtrates. And the title of Confeſſor to thoſe, who, after making the ſame profeſſion, had been committed onely to priſon, in order to be reſerved to the ſame tortures, or puniſhed with death. Whence *Tertullian* calls them, *Martyres deſignati*, or Martyrs elect, [ad Martyr. i. vid. Cypr. Ep. viii. & Not. Rigalt. 8.]

But with regard to this caſe of Martyrdom, I cannot forbear obſerving a ſtrange contrariety both of principle and practice in theſe primitive

It is not my deſign, by what is ſaid here on the ſubject of Martyrdom, to detract in any

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ages, between the times of *Polycarp* and *Tertullian*. The Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, in the narrative of it, written by the Church of *Smyrna*, is twice called an *Evangelical Martyrdom*, or performed according to the rules of the Goſpel, and in imitation of Chriſt; [§ i. 19.] who did not offer himſelf forwardly to his enemies, but withdrew himſelf from them, and waited till he was betrayed into their hands: and commanded his Apoſtles alſo, *when they were perſecuted in one City, to flee into another*. [Matt. x. 29.] When the perſecution therefore grew hot in *Smyrna*, *Polycarp* withdrew himſelf from that city into the neighbouring villages; ſhifting his quarters ſtill from village to village, to avoid his purſuers, till he was betrayed by one of his own domeſtics; [§ 9.] and ſo fulfilled both the example and precept of our Lord. And upon the ſame authority alſo, *Clemens* of *Alexandria* declares it to be a ſin, and a kind of ſelf-murder, not to flee on ſuch an occaſion from the malice of their perſecutors. [Strom. l. iv. c. 10.]

Tertullian, on the contrary, about half a century after, wrote a book againſt *all flight in perſecution*, in which he labors to prove, "that our Saviour's precept was temporary, and peculiar to the circumſtances of thoſe times, and addreſſed wholly to the Apoſtles; who yet afterwards, when thoſe circumſtances were changed, both practiſed and preſcribed a different conduct. That it was baſe in private Chriſtians to fly, and much more in Biſhops and Paſtors.—That a good Shepherd will lay down his life for his flock, but a bad one fly at the ſight of the wolf, and leave his ſheep to be torn in pieces." [p. 97, 696.] He inveighs alſo againſt another practice, which ſeems to have been common among the Chriſtians of thoſe days, *of ranſoming themſelves from their perſecutors by a ſum of money*; and declares it to be "an affront to God to redeem thoſe by money, whom Chriſt had redeemed with his blood: and to make ſecret bargains with an informer or ſoldier, or knaviſh Preſident, for the manner from the real merit and juſt praiſe of thoſe primitive Martyrs, who, with an invincible conſtancy, ſuſtained the cauſe of Chriſt, at

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" life of a Chriſtian (whom Chriſt had purchaſed and ſet free in the face of the world) as if it were for a thief. [p. 697, 698.] He exhorts them therefore to commit themſelves intirely to God; who could either throw them into the midſt of their enemies, while they were flying, or cover them from danger even in the midſt of the people: and he ſhews by an eminent example, that neither flight nor money was effectual to procure their ſafety. *Rutilius*, ſays he, a moſt holy Martyr, after he had oft eſcaped by flying from place to place, and redeemed himſelf, as he imagined, from all danger by his money, yet in all this ſecurity, was unexpectedly apprehended, carried before the Preſident, and put to a ſevere torture, for the correction, I believe, of his flight: and being committed at laſt to the flames, he then aſcribed the Martyrdom, which he had been avoiding, to the mercy of God: and what elſe did the Lord intend to teach us by this example, but that we ought not to fly from perſecution?" [p. 93.]

Theſe were the principles, which generally prevailed in the Church from the time of *Tertullian*: ſo that when two of the moſt eminent Biſhops, who ſucceeded him, St. *Cyprian of Carthage*, and St. *Dionyſius of Alexandria*, found it expedient in a time of perſecution, to preſerve their lives by retiring from their ſeveral Sees, they had no other excuſe to recur to, but the plea of a divine revelation, and the expreſs command of God for it: the precept and example of our Saviour; the practice of his Apoſtles; and *the Evangelical Martyrdom of St.* Polycarp, being no longer of any force, againſt the Enthuſiaſtic zeal, and viſionary temper of that age. Which zeal however, becauſe it happened to be ridiculed by an infidel writer, is ſtrenuouſly defended by Dr. *Chapman*, in the very words and reaſoning of *Tertullian*. See Miſcel. Tracts, p. 157.

the expence of their lives. It is reaſonable to believe, that, generally ſpeaking, they were the beſt ſort of Chriſtians, diſtinguiſhed by their exemplary zeal and piety; and the chief ornaments of the Church in their ſeveral ages: yet it is certain, that they were ſubject ſtill to the ſame paſſions, prejudices, and errors, which were common to all the other pious Chiſtians of the ſame age. My ſole view therefore is, to expoſe the vanity of thoſe extravagant honors, and that idolatrous worſhip, which are paid to them indiſcriminately by the Church of *Rome*; and to ſhew eſpecially, that the circumſtance of their Martyrdom, while it gives the ſtrongeſt proof of the ſincerity of their faith and truſt in the promiſes of the Goſpel, adds nothing to the character of their knowledge or their ſagacity; nor conſequently, any weight to their teſtimony, in preference to that of any other juſt and devout Chriſtian whatſoever [1].

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[1] *Savonarola*, a moſt pious and learned Monk of the fifteenth century, preached with great force and eloquence in *Italy*, againſt the corruptions of the court of *Rome*, and the flagitious life and practices of Pope *Alexander* the ſixth, who not being able to ſilence him, condemned him to be hanged: of whom Dr. *Jer. Taylor* tells the following ſtory:

"Two *Franciſcan Friars*, "ſays he, offered themſelves "to the fire, to prove *Savonarola* to be an Heretic. But "a certain *Jacobin* offered "himſelf to the fire, to prove, "that *Savonarola* had true "revelations, and was no "Heretic. In the mean "time *Savonarola* preached, "but made no ſuch confident offer, nor durſt he venture at that new kind of "*fire ordeal*; and put the caſe, "that all four had paſſed "through the fire, and died "in the flames, what would

§ 4. It has been frequently objected by my Antagoniſts, that to reject the unanimous teſtimony of the Fathers, in their reports of the primitive miracles, will deſtroy the faith and credit of all hiſtory.

This was the conſtant cant of all the zealots, even of the Heathen world, whenever any of their eſtabliſhed ſuperſtitions were attacked by men of ſenſe. “If theſe things, they cried, “approved by the wiſdom of our anceſtors, “and confirmed by the conſent of ages, can be “ſhewn at laſt to be falſe, we muſt burn all our

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“that have proved? Had he “been a Heretic, or no Heretic, the more or the leſs, “for the confidence of theſe “zealous Idiots? If we mark “it, a great many arguments, on which many “Sects rely, are no better “probation than this.” Lib. of Proph. Ep. Dedic. p. 39.

There is another ſtory likewiſe, ſomewhat applicable to the preſent purpoſe, which I have elſewhere made uſe of, as it is told by Sir *Tho. Roe*; “that the houſe and Church “of the Jeſuits in *India* happening to be burnt, the “Crucifix was found untouched, which was given “out as a miracle. Upon “this, the King ſent for the “Jeſuit, and having examined him about the fact, made “this propoſal to him, *That* “*if he would caſt the Crucifix* “*into the fire before his face,* “*and it did not burn, he would* “*turn Chriſtian.* The Jeſuit “would not venture the credit of his religion on ſo hazardous an experiment, yet “offered to caſt himſelf into “the fire, as a proof of his “own faith, which the King “would not allow.” For he had ſenſe enough to know the difference, between the effect of a miracle and a martyrdom; that the laſt could prove nothing but the Jeſuit's ſincerity, in what he profeſſed to believe; whereas the firſt would yield the ſtrongeſt confirmation to the truth alſo of what he taught. [See Lett. from *Rome*, Præfat. Diſc. p. 100.]

" annals, and believe nothing at all [1]." And the ſame outcry, as *Euſebius* tells us, was made by them alſo againſt the Chriſtians, when the Goſpel firſt began to ſpread itſelf among them: " that to reject a belief and worſhip univerſally " eſtabliſhed by Kings, Legiſlators, and Philo- " ſophers of all nations, whether *Greeks* or *Bar-* " *barians*, was an impious apoſtacy from the " rites of their anceſtors, and a contradiction " to the ſenſe and judgement of mankind [2]." The Chriſtians, on the other hand, conſtantly derided this plea, and declared, " that to follow " the inventions of their anceſtors, without any " judgement or examinations, and to be led " perpetually by others, like brute animals, " was to preclude themſelves from that ſearch " of wiſdom and knowledge, which is natural " to man [3]." Yet when it came at laſt to their own turn, to find the authority of ages on their ſide, they took up the ſame plea which they had before rejected; and urge it at this day, as the principal objection to Proteſtantiſm: " That it is a *mere novelty*. which had no exiſt- " ence in the world before *Luther*, contradicto- " ry to the practice of all the primitive Saints

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[1] Negemus omnia; comburamus annales; ficta hæc eſſe dicamus, &c. Cic. de Divin. l. i. 17.

[2] Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. i. c. 2.

[3] Quare cum ſapere, id eſt, ſapientiam quærere, omnibus ſit innatum; ſapientiam ſibi adimunt, qui ſine ullo judicio inventa majorum probant, & ab aliis, pecudum more, ducuntur, &c. Lactant. Divin. Inſtit. l. ii. c. 8.

“ and Martyrs of the Catholic Church, and to “ the unanimous conſent of fifteen centuries.”

If this objection therefore had ever been found to have any force in it, the ancient Chriſtians could never have over-ruled the impoſtures of Paganiſm; nor our Reformers, the ſuperſtitions of Popery. But in truth, when it comes to be ſeriouſly conſidered, (it will appear to have no ſenſe at all in it;) and if the Doctors *Chapman* and *Berriman*, who now revive and ſo zealouſly urge it, were called upon to explane themſelves upon it, they would find it difficult, I dare ſay, to tell us what they mean by it. If they mean, that a contempt of thoſe miracles, which they would perſuade us to believe, would neceſſarily derive the ſame contempt on hiſtory itſelf, all experience has ſhewn the contrary; for though there have been doubters and contemners of ſuch miracles in all ages, yet hiſtory has maintained its ground through them all. During the three firſt centuries, the whole world in a manner not onely doubted, but rejected the miracles of the primitive Chriſtians: yet hiſtory was written and read with the ſame pleaſure and profit as before, and applied by the unbelievers themſelves to the confirmation of their very doubts. Our commerce with the times paſt, as they are repreſented to us in hiſtory, is of much the ſame kind, with our manner of dealing with the preſent. We find many men in the world, whoſe fidelity we have juſt ground to ſuſpect; yet a number of others, whom we can readily truſt, ſufficient to ſupport that credit and mutual confidence, by which the buſineſs of life is carried on: juſt ſo in ancient Hiſtory; we find many things of which we have cauſe to doubt; many, which we are obliged to reject; yet its uſe ſtill ſubſiſts, and from real and indiſputable facts, ſupplies ſufficient matter both of inſtruction and entertainment to every judicious reader.

If our Doctors therefore mean any thing by the objection, which we are examining, it muſt be this; that the ſame principle, which induces us to ſuſpect the primitive miracles, and particularly thoſe of *Simeon Stylites*, when ſo forcibly and credibly atteſted, muſt induce us alſo, if we are conſiſtent with ourſelves, to ſuſpect every thing, that is delivered to us from ancient hiſtory. But they widely miſtake the matter; and do not at all reflect on what I have intimated above, that the hiſtory of miracles is of a kind totally different from that of common events; the one, to be ſuſpected always of courſe, without the ſtrongeſt evidence to confirm it; the other, to be admitted of courſe, without as ſtrong reaſon to ſuſpect it. Ordinary facts, related by a credible perſon, furniſh no cauſe of doubting from the nature of the thing: but if they be ſtrange and extraordinary, doubts naturally ariſe, and in proportion as they approach towards the marvellous, thoſe doubts ſtill increaſe and grow ſtronger: for mere honeſty will not warrant them; we require other qualities in the Hiſtorian; a degree of knowledge, experience, and diſcernment, ſufficient to judge of the whole nature and circumſtances of the caſe: and if any of theſe be wanting, we neceſſarily ſuſpend our belief. A weak man, indeed, if honeſt, may atteſt common events as credibly as the wiſeſt; yet can hardly make any report, that is credible, of ſuch as are miraculous; becauſe a ſuſpicion will always occur, that his weakneſs, and imperfect knowledge of the extent of human art, had been impoſed upon by the craft of cunning Jugglers. On the other hand, ſhould a man of known abilities and judgement, relate to us things miraculous, or undertake to perform them himſelf, the very notion of his ſkill, without an aſſurance alſo of his integrity, would excite onely the greater ſuſpicion of him [1]; eſpecially, if he had any intereſt to promote, or any favorite opinion to recommend, by the authority of ſuch works: becauſe a pretenſion to miracles, has in all ages and nations, been found the moſt effectual inſtrument of Impoſtors, towards deluding the multitude, and gaining their ends upon them.

There is not a ſingle Hiſtorian of Antiquity, whether Greek or Latin, who has not recorded *Oracles*, *prodigies*, *prophecies*, *and miracles*, on the occaſion of ſome memorable events, or revolutions of States and Kingdoms. Many of theſe are atteſted in the graveſt manner, and by the graveſt writers, and were firmly believed at the time by the populace: yet it is certain, that there is not one of them which we can reaſonably take to be genuine; not one, but what was either wholly forged, or, from the opportunity of ſome unuſual circumſtance attending it, improved and aggravated into ſomething ſupernatural. This was undoubtedly the caſe of all the Heathen miracles; and though it may hurt in ſome meaſure the general credit of miracles, yet, as experience has plainly ſhewn, it has not in any degree affected the credit of common hiſtory. For example, *Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus* is eſteemed one of the moſt faithful and accurate Hiſtorians of Antiquity: we take his word without ſcruple, and preferably even to the Roman writers, in his account of the civil affairs of *Rome*; yet we laugh at the fictitious miracles which he has interſperſed in it. "In the war with the "*Latins*, he tells us, how the Gods, *Caſtor* and "*Pollux*, appeared viſibly on white horſes, and "fought on the ſide of the *Romans*, who, by "their aſſiſtance, gained a complete victory; "and that for a perpetual memorial of it, a "Temple was publicly erected, and a yearly "feſtival, ſacrifice, and proceſſion, inſtituted to "the honor of thoſe Deities [1]." Now tho'

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[1] Quo quis verſutior & callidior eſt, hoc inviſior & ſuſpectior, detracta opinione probitatis. Cic. Off. ii. 9.

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[1] Vid. Dionyſ. Hal. Antiqu. l. vi. p. 337. Edit. Oxon.

N.B. A late Hiſtorian of our own Kingdom, in his deſcription of the battel of *Worceſter*, between *Charles* II. and *Oliver Cromwell*, has delivered a ſtory to poſterity, concerning a certain contract nobody at this day believes a tittle of the miracle, yet the faith of Hiſtory is not hurt by it. We admit the battel and the victory; and take the miraculous part to be, what it certainly was, the fiction of the Commanders or perſons intereſted; contrived for the ſake of ſome private, as well as public benefit, which the nature of the caſe will eaſily ſuggeſt.

Thus in the narrative alſo, above mentioned, of the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp*, the point of hiſtory is, that he was condemned to death at *Smyrna*, of which he was Biſhop, and there actually burnt at the Stake, for his profeſſion of the Chriſtian faith. We have no doubt therefore of his Martyrdom, yet may reaſonably pauſe at the miracles, which are ſaid to have attended it. The voice pretended to come from heaven, was heard onely by a few, and that in a time of ſuch hurry, in which nothing could be heard diſtinctly. If ſuch a voice therefore had been uttered by any one in the croud, as it was hardly poſſible to diſcern whence it came, ſo thoſe whoſe zeal and imagination were particu-

made in form, between *Oliver and the Devil*, in a perſonal conference. Which ſtory was ſo ſtrongly atteſted, that he thought himſelf obliged to inſert it, as I heard him ſay, by the advice of ſome learned friends. But the faith of hiſtory would reſt on a very ſlippery bottom, could it be ſhaken in any degree by our contempt of ſo ſilly a tale: which though no man of a ſound judgement can think credible, yet none will conceive the leaſt doubt on that account, about the reality of the battel, or the other circumſtances of it, as they are related by the ſame hiſtorian. See Echard's Hiſt. of Engl.

larly affected by ſo moving an occaſion, might eaſily miſtake it for miraculous. The flame alſo is ſaid to have made an arch around his body, and could not burn it: an appearance, which might eaſily happen from the common effects of the wind, or ſomething at leaſt ſo like it, as to afford matter enough to a ſuperſtitious fancy, to ſupply the reſt. But the circumſtance of a *Dove flying out of his body*, *when pierced by a ſword*, is beyond all belief: or if a *Dove* was really ſeen to fly out of the wood, which was prepared to conſume him, it might have been conveyed thither, probably by deſign, in order to be let looſe at a certain moment: as in the funerals of the Roman Emperors, an Eagle was always obſerved to fly out of the funeral pile, as ſoon as it began to blaze, which was ſuppoſed *to convey the ſoul of the deceaſed* into heaven: of which a ſolemn depoſition was conſtantly made upon oath, in order to the Deification of thoſe Emperors [1].

But the caſe of witchcraft affords the moſt effectual proof of the truth of what I am advancing. There is not in all hiſtory any one miraculous fact, ſo authentically atteſted as the exiſtence of witches. All Chriſtian nations whatſoever have conſented in the belief of them, and provided capital laws againſt them: in conſequence of which, many hundreds of both ſexes have ſuffered a cruel death. In our own country, great numbers have been condemned to die, at different times, after a public trial, by the moſt eminent Judges of the Kingdom: and in ſome places, for a perpetual memorial of their diabolical practices, anniverſary ſermons and ſolemnities have been piouſly inſtituted, and ſubſiſt at this day, to propagate a deteſtation of them to all poſterity [1]. Now to deny the reality of Facts, ſo ſolemnly atteſted, and ſo uni-

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[1] Ἀετὸς δέ τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀφεθεὶς ἀνέπτατο, ὡς καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναφέρων. Dio. de Fun. Auguſt. l. lvi. p. 598.

Γενομένου δὲ τούτου, ἀετός τις ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀνέπτατο· καὶ ὁ μὲν Πέρτιναξ οὕτως ἠθανατίσθη. Id. de Fun. Pertinac. l. lxxiv. p. 842.

Καὶ τί γὰρ τοὺς ἀποθνήσκοντας παρ᾽ ὑμῖν αὐτοκράτορας ἀεὶ ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι ἀξιοῦντες, καὶ ὀμνύντα τινὰ προάγετε ἑωρακέναι ἐκ τῆς πυρᾶς ἀνερχόμενον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸν κατακαέντα Καίσαρα. Juſt. Martyr. Apol. i. p. 32. Ed. Thirlb.

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[1] In the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* reign, the Court ſeems to have been greatly alarmed by an imaginary increaſe of this Infernal Art, and the horrible miſchiefs which it was then actually perpetrating in the Kingdom; and which were loudly proclaimed from the Pulpit, by many of the celebrated Preachers. Among the reſt, it is ſurprizing to perceive, to what a length of ſuperſtition and credulity, the great Biſhop *Jewel* was carried on this occaſion, by his prejudices and prepoſſeſſion in favor of this popular deluſion: a Prelate as venerable for his piety, learning, and judgement, as any in the earlieſt ages of the Church: who, in a ſermon preached before the Queen, taking occaſion to touch upon this ſubject, addreſſes himſelf to Her in the following words: "It "may pleaſe your Grace to "underſtand, that this kind "of People, I mean witches "and ſorcerers, within theſe "few years are marvelouſly "increaſed within your "Grace's realm. Theſe eyes "have ſeen moſt evident and "manifeſt marks of their "wickedneſs. Your Grace's "ſubjects pine away, even "unto death; their color "fadeth; their fleſh rotteth; "their ſpeech is benumbed; "their ſenſes bereft. Where"fore your poor ſubjects

" humble petition to your " Highneſs is, that the laws " touching ſuch Malefactors " may be put in due execu- " tion. For the ſhoal of " them is great, their doings " horrible, their malice in- " tolerable, their examples " moſt miſerable: and I pray " God, they never practiſe " farther than upon the ſub- " ject." Upon which paſſage Mr. *Strype* remarks, that the remonſtrances of this kind made by this Biſhop and others, gave occaſion, *to bring a Bill into the next Parliament, for making Inchantments and Witchcraft Felony.* See annals at the Reformat. vol. i. p. 8.

When *Tertullian,* in proof of the miraculous powers, which were clamed by the Chriſtians of that age, challenges the Heathen Magiſtrates, to come and ſee how eaſily the Chriſtian *Exorciſts* could drive Devils out of the bodies of men, he might be aſſured probably at the ſame time, that the notice of his challenge would never reach thoſe Magiſtrates, or at leaſt, that they would never pay any regard to it: yet pluming himſelf, as it were, upon it, he adds, *and what can be more manifeſt than this operation, what more convincing than this proof?* [Apolog. c. xxiii.] But I would aſk the warmeſt advocates of the primitive miracles, whether this *convincing proof of Tertullian,* or the expreſs teſtimony of any other Father, or any number of them, can in any manner be compared with that ſtrength of evidence, which, through all ages, affirmed the exiſtence of witches and their direful practices, by the moſt ſolemn acts of Kings and Parliaments, and whole nations; who, after many public trials, and the ſtricteſt examinations, have conſtantly atteſted the reality of the facts and crimes, with which they were charged, of inflicting horrible pains and diſeaſes, and deſtroying the lives of many innocent people, by the force of their charms and ſorceries. See the printed trials of *nineteen witches,* ten of whom were condemned together at *Lancaſter,* 1612, where the Judge, in paſſing ſentence of death upon them, ſpeaks of *many cruel and barbarous murthers,* of which they had been guilty, beſides other crimes, of tormenting the bodies, and deſtroying the cattle of their neighbours.

verſally believed, ſeems to give the lie to the ſenſe and experience of all Chriſtendom; to the wiſeſt and beſt of every nation, to public monuments ſubſiſting to our own times: yet the incredibility of the thing prevailed, and was found at laſt too ſtrong for all this force of human teſtimony: ſo that the belief of witches is now utterly extinct, and quietly buried without involving hiſtory in its ruin, or leaving even the leaſt diſgrace or cenſure upon it.

There is another inſtance alſo, within our own times, more directly applicable to our preſent purpoſe. I mean the pretended miracles of the late Abbé de Paris, which made ſuch a noiſe in France a few years ago, and are ſtill believed by a great part of that Kingdom, or by all perhaps, who believe any other miracles of that Church. This Abbé was a zealous *Janſeniſt*, and warm oppoſer of that Bull or Conſtitution of Pope *Clemens* XI. called *Unigenitus*, by which all the doctrines of his ſect were expreſly condemned. He died in 1725, and was buried in the Church-yard of St. *Medard* in *Paris*; whither the great reputation of his ſanctity drew many people to viſit his tomb, and pay their devotions to him, as to a Saint: and this concourſe gradually increaſing, made him ſoon be conſidered as a ſubject, proper to revive the credit of that party, now utterly depreſſed by the power of the Jeſuits, ſupported by the authority of the Court. Within ſix years therefore after his death, the confident report of miracles, wrought at his tomb, began to alarm not onely the city of *Paris*, but the whole nation: while infinite crouds were perpetually preſſing to the place, and proclaming the benefits received from the Saint: nor could all the power of the Government give a check to the rapidity of this ſuperſtition, till by incloſing the tomb within a wall, they effectually obſtructed all acceſs to it [1].

This expedient, though it put an end to the external worſhip of the Saint, could not ſhake the credit of his miracles: diſtinct accounts of which were carefully drawn up, and diſperſed among the people, with an atteſtation of them much more ſtrong and authentic, than what has ever been alledged for the miracles of any other age, ſince the days of the Apoſtles. *Monſ. de Montgeron*, a perſon of eminent rank in *Paris* [2], publiſhed a ſelect number of them, in a pompous volume in quarto, which he dedicated to the King, and preſented to him in perſon; being induced to the publication of them, as he declares, by the inconteſtible evidence of the facts; by which he himſelf, from a libertin and profeſſed Deiſt, became a ſincere convert to the Chriſtian faith. But beſides the collection of

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[1] This ſtep gave occaſion to the following Epigram, which was fixed upon the incloſure, in the ſtyle of the Royal Edicts:

De par le Roy. Defenſe à Dieu
De faire miracles, en ce lieu.

[2] Conſeillier au Parlement de Paris.

Mr. *de Montgeron*, ſeveral other collections were made, containing in the whole above an hundred miracles, which are all publiſhed together in three volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits, and letters, annexed to each of them at full length.

The greateſt part of theſe miracles were employed in the cures of deſperate diſeaſes, in their laſt and deplored ſtate, and after all human remedies had for many years been tried upon them in vain: but the Patients no ſooner addreſſed themſelves to the tomb of this Saint, than the moſt inveterate caſes, and complications of Palſies, Apoplexies, and Dropſies, and even Blindneſs and Lameneſs, &c. were either inſtantly cured, or greatly relieved, and within a ſhort time after wholly removed. All which cures were performed in the Church-yard of St. *Medard*, in the open view of the people, and with ſo general a belief of the finger of God in them, that many *Infidels*, *Debauchees*, *Schiſmatics*, and *Heretics*, are ſaid to have been converted by them to the Catholic faith. And the reality of them is atteſted by ſome of the principal Phyſicians and Surgeons in France, as well as the Clergy of the firſt dignity; ſeveral of whom were eye-witneſſes of them, who preſented a verbal proceſs of each to the Archbiſhops, with a petition, ſigned by above twenty *Cures*, or Rectors of the Pariſhes of *Paris*, deſiring that they might be authentically regiſtred, and ſolemnly publiſhed to the people, as true miracles.

I have ſeen an anſwer to theſe miracles by a Proteſtant writer, Mr. *Des Voeux*; who does not deny the facts, but the miraculous nature of them onely, which by many reaſons he endeavours to render ſuſpected. Yet another writer on the ſame ſide, declares, that all his reaſons are too weak to do them any hurt; and that there is no other way of ſhaking their credit, than by ſhewing them to be the works of the Devil. Which he undertakes to prove, in three letters to the ſaid Mr. *Des Voeux*, to be the genuin character of them.

Let our Declamers then on the authority of the Fathers, and the faith of hiſtory, produce if they can, any evidence of the primitive miracles, half ſo ſtrong, as what is alledged for the miracles of the *Abbé de Paris*: or if they cannot do it, let them give us a reaſon, why we muſt receive the one and reject the other; or if they fail likewiſe in this, let them be ſo ingenuous at laſt as to confeſs, that we have no other part left, but either to admit them all, or reject them all; for otherwiſe, they can never be thought to act conſiſtently. And if, from their avowed principles and blind deference to authority, we may gueſs at their real ſentiments in the preſent caſe, they will be as little ſcrupulous about the modern, as the ancient miracles of the Church, but patiently admit them all; as being more agreeable to that rule, which is preſcribed by their primitive Guides; "that the "true diſciples of Chriſt, *have nothing more to* "*do with curioſity or inquiry, but when they are* "*once become believers, their ſole buſineſs is to be-*"*lieve on* [1]."

Again, the celebrated Hiſtorian, Mr. *de Vertot*, whoſe *Revolutions of Rome, of Sweden, and of Portugal*, afford ſo much entertainment to the public, has written a defence alſo of a certain miracle, which is imagined to do ſome honor to the Church and Kingdom of *France*: I mean the miracle of *the ſacred vial*, or *Sainte Ampoulle*, as it is called, with which their Kings are anointed at their coronation [2].

This Vial is ſaid to have been brought from heaven by a Dove, for the baptiſmal unction of *Clovis*,

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[1] Nobis curioſitate non opus eſt poſt Jeſum Chriſtum, nec inquiſitione poſt Evangelium; cum credimus, nihil deſideramus ultra credere. Tertull. de Præſcript. Hæret. § VIII.

[2] The Abbé de Vertot begins his Diſſertation on this vial, in the following manner:

"There has ſcarce ever "been a more ſenſible and "illuſtrious mark of the viſible protection of God, "over the Monarchy of "*France*, than the celebrated "miracle of the ſacred vial. "On the day of Great *Clovis's* baptiſm, heaven de-"clared itſelf in favor of that "prince and his ſucceſſors, "in a particular manner; "and, by way of preference "to all the other Sovereigns "of Chriſtendom. So that "we may juſtly apply to every one of our Kings, on "the day of their coronation, the words of the Royal Prophet: *God, even thy* "*God, has anointed thee with* "*the oil of gladneſs, above thy* "*fellows*." Diſſertat. au ſujet de la ſainte Ampoulle—Dans les Memoires de l'Acad. des Inſcript, & Bell. Let. tom. ii. p. 665.

Clovis, the firſt Chriſtian King of France, and dropped into the hands of St. *Remigius,* then Biſhop of *Rheims,* about the end of the fifth century: where it has been preſerved ever ſince for the purpoſe of anointing all ſucceding Kings [1], and its divine deſcent is ſaid to be confirmed by this miracle; that *as ſoon as the coronation is over, the oil in the Vial begins to waſte and vaniſh, but is conſtantly renewed of itſelf, for the ſervice of each new coronation* [2].

The *Abbé de Vertot* defends the truth of this miracle by the authority of ſeveral witneſſes, who lived at the time of *Remigius,* or near to it; and of many later writers alſo, who give teſtimony to the ſame, through each ſucceding age. Yet a learned Profeſſor at *Utrecht,* in a diſſertation upon this ſubject, treats it as a mere forgery, or pious fraud, contrived to ſupport the dignity of the *Kings and Clergy of France*; and ranks it in the ſame claſs with the *Palladium of Troy, the Ancilia of old Rome, and the Croſs, which Conſtantin pretended to ſee in the heavens*; and the reſt of thoſe political fictions, which we meet with in the hiſtories of all ages [3].

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[1] Idem primus & omnes
Poſt ipſum Reges, Francorum ad ſceptra vocati,
Quando coronantur, oleo ſacrantur eodem.
Ib. p. 674.

[2] Cujus prece rorem
Miſit in Ampullam cœleſtem Rector Olympi,
Corpus ut hoc lavacro Regis deberet inungi,
Deficeretque liquor, ibi corpore Regis inuncto.
Nic. de Braia, De S. Remigio.

[3] Vid. Everard. Ottonis J. C. Diſſertat. &c. § iv. p. 365.

Now what will our Advocates of the primitive miracles ſay to this? Will they tell us here, as they have often done on ſimilar occaſions, that by rejecting the authority of Mr. *Vertot*, and his witneſſes, in this ſtory, we deſtroy the faith of all his other ſtories, and can no longer take his word for any thing, which he has related of *Rome*, or *Sweden*, or *Portugal?* Let them talk at this ſilly rate as long as they pleaſe, men of ſenſe will always know how to diſtinguiſh in ſuch caſes; how to extract all the inſtruction which is offered to them, in one part of his writings; yet guard themſelves from all the ſuperſtition, which is inculcated in the other. They know, that on ſubjects of common hiſtory, a writer of ſenſe and credit can hardly have any other motive of writing, but to pleaſe and inſtruct; and to illuſtrate the truth of facts, as far as he was able, by the perſpicuity of his ſtyle, and the proper diſpoſition of his materials: but on ſubjects of a miraculous kind, they know likewiſe, how forcibly the prejudices of education, a ſuperſtitious turn of mind, the intereſts of a party, or the views of ambition, are apt to operate on a defender of thoſe miracles, which the government and religion of his country are engaged to ſupport.

Theſe few inſtances are ſufficient to evince

De Unctione Remenſi. Traject. ad Rhen. quarto. 1723. Trojani *Palladium.*—Virgilius *lapſa Ancilia cœlo*—veneratur. Conſtantinus, literas ἐν τούτῳ νίκα in cœlo legiſſe fertur, &c. vid. ibid.

the reaſonableneſs and prudence of ſuſpending our aſſent to reports of a miraculous kind, tho' atteſted by an authority, which might ſafely be truſted in the report of ordinary events. They teach us alſo how opinions, wholly abſurd and contrary to nature, may gain credit and eſtabliſhment through ages and nations, which, by the force of education, cuſtom, and example, have once contracted a ſuperſtitious and credulous turn: till being checked from time to time by the gradual improvements of ſcience, and the ſucceſſive efforts of reaſon, inquiring occaſionally into the uncertain grounds, and reflecting on the certain miſchiefs of them, they have fallen at laſt into ſuch utter contempt, as to make us wonder, how it was poſſible for them, ever to have obtained any credit.

But whatever be the uncertainty of ancient hiſtory, there is one thing at leaſt, which we may certainly learn from it, that human nature has always been the ſame; agitated by the ſame appetites and paſſions, and liable to the ſame excuſes and abuſes of them, in all ages and countries of the world; ſo that our experience of what paſſes in the preſent age, will be the beſt comment on what is delivered to us concerning the paſt. To apply it then to the caſe before us; there is hardly a ſingle fact, which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we ſtill ſee performed, in one or other of the Sects of Chriſtians of our own times. Among ſome we ſee *diſeaſes cured*, *Devils caſt out*, *and all the other miracles*, which are ſaid to have been wrought in the primitive Church: among others, we ſee the boaſted gifts of *Tertullian's* and *Cyprian's* days; *pretended revelations*, *prophetic viſions*, *and divine impreſſions*: now all theſe modern pretenſions we readily aſcribe to their true cauſe; to the artifices and craft of a few, playing upon the credulity, the ſuperſtition, and the enthuſiaſm of the many, for the ſake of ſome private intereſt: when we read therefore, that the ſame things were performed by the ancients, and for the ſame ends, of acquiring a ſuperiority of credit, or wealth, or power, over their fellow creatures, how can we poſſibly heſitate, to impute them to the ſame cauſe, of fraud and impoſture?

In a word; to ſubmit our belief implicitely and indifferently, to the mere force of authority, in all caſes, whether miraculous or natural, without any rule of diſcerning the credible from the incredible, might ſupport indeed the faith, as it is called, but would certainly deſtroy the uſe, of all hiſtory; by leading us into perpetual errors, and poſſeſſing our minds with invincible prejudices, and falſe notions, both of men and things. But to diſtinguiſh between things, totally different from each other; between miracle and nature; the extraordinery acts of God, and the ordinary tranſactions of man; to ſuſpend our belief of the one, while, on the ſame teſtimony, we grant it freely to the other; and to require a different degree of evidence for each, in proportion to the different degrees of their credibility; is ſo far from hurting the credit of hiſtory, or of any thing elſe, which we ought to believe, that it is the onely way to purge hiſtory from its droſs, and render it beneficial to us; and by a right uſe of our reaſon and judgement, to raiſe our minds above the low prejudices, and childiſh ſuperſtitions, of the credulous vulgar.

There cannot be a ſtronger proof of the ſtupid credulity and ſuperſtition of thoſe primitive ages, into which we have been inquiring, and of the facility of impoſing any fictions upon them, which their leaders thought fit to inculcate, that what is related by St. *Auſtin, from the report*, as he ſays, of *credible perſons*, " that at *Epheſus*, " where St. *John*, the Apoſtle, lay buried, he was " not believed to be dead, " but to be ſleeping onely " in the grave, which he " had provided for himſelf, " till our Lord's ſecond coming: in proof of which, " they affirmed, that the " earth, under which he lay, " was ſeen to heave up and " down perpetually, in conformity to the motion of " his body, in the act of " breathing." Which ridiculous conceit was grounded on thoſe words ſpoken by our Lord of that Apoſtle, *If I will that he tarry till I come; what is that to thee?* Whence the other Apoſtles inferred, *that St. John ſhould not die.* [Jo. xxi. 23.] vid. Auguſtin. in loc. Oper. T. iii. p. 819, 820.

But we have another inſtance, in our own country, of a credulity not leſs extravagant, than what is juſt mentioned, in the caſe of a perſon believed to be poſſeſſed by the Devil; an account of which was printed and publiſhed with the following title: " The *Surey* " *Demoniac*. Or an account of " *Satan's* ſtrange and dreadful Actings, in and about " the body of *Richard Dugdale*, of *Surey* near *Whalley* " in *Lancaſhire*. And how " he was diſpoſſeſſed by " God's bleſſing on the Faſtings and Prayers of divers

" Miniſters and people. The " matter of fact atteſted by " the oaths of ſeveral credible perſons, before ſome " of his Majeſty's Juſtices of " the peace in the ſaid " County. London 1697." —Theſe dreadfull actings of *Satan* continued above a year: during which, there was a deſperate ſtruggle between him, and nine Miniſters of the Goſpel, who had undertaken to caſt him out; and for that purpoſe, ſucceſſively relieved each other in their daily combats with him: while *Satan*, as in the days of *Tertullian*, tried all his arts to baffle their attempts; inſulting them with ſcoffs and raillery; puzzling them ſometimes, with Latin and Greek, and threatning them with the effects of his vengeance; till he was finally vanquiſhed and put to flight by the perſevering prayers and faſtings of the ſaid Miniſters: the truth of which fact is more ſubſtantially atteſted, than any caſe of the ſame kind, in all the primitive ages. *Monſ. de Fontenelle*, a writer juſtly celebrated for his admirable parts and learning, ſpeaking of the origin and progreſs of theſe popular ſuperſtitions, ſays, " Give me but half a " dozen perſons, whom I " can perſuade, that it is not " the ſun, which makes our " day-light, and I ſhould not " deſpair of drawing whole " nations to embrace the " ſame belief. For how ridiculous ſoever the opi" nion be, let it be ſupport" ed onely for a certain time, " and the buſineſs is done; " for when it once becomes " ancient, it is ſufficiently " proved."—Hiſt. des Oracles, c. xi.

Dr. *MID-*

Dr. *MIDDLETON*'s
LETTERS
TO
Mr. *WARBURTON.*

LETTER I.

Dorcheſter, Sept. 11, 1736.

SIR,

YOUR Candor, I hope, has already prevented me in ſuggeſting ſome favourable excuſe for my long ſilence. The truth, which is always the beſt apology, is, that I was abſent from *Cambridge* when your letter arrived there; and though it was tranſmitted to me at this place, yet it found me in no condition to anſwer it, either to your ſatisfaction or my own. I am here unprovided of *Tully's* works, and without the help of my papers to furniſh any hints to me on the ſubject; ſpending my time ſuitably to the taſte and temptations of the country, in cards at home and ſports abroad; yet I could not longer defer to pay my thanks at leaſt for the great entertainment that it gave me; with promiſe of further payment, as ſoon as I am able.

The point that you undertook to make good concerning *Tully*, is, that *he did not believe a future ſtate.* In proof of which you maintain, that in *his Epiſtles onely*, of all his works, we are to look for *his real ſentiments.*

This, though ſupported by you very ingeniouſly, is not, I own, agreeable to the notion that I had formed, from my general acquaintance with his writings: and as I have not yet had leiſure to make it the ſubject of a particular enquiry, ſo at preſent I can onely give my looſe and indigeſted thoughts on the matter; which I ſhall do very freely, and in the method that you have ſketched out to me.

You aſſign four reaſons of the difficulty of diſcovering *Tully's* opinions on the important queſtions of philoſophy. 1. The character of the ancient philoſophy in general. 2. The manner in which the *Romans* received the *Greek* philoſophy. 3. The nature of that philoſophy, which *Tully* eſpouſed. 4. The peculiar character of the man.

1. By the firſt, you mean *the double doctrine* of the old maſters; *the external and internal*; the one for the vulgar, the other for the adept. But whatever effect this had in *Greece*, where that way of teaching ſeems to have been dropped long before *Tully*, it certainly had none in *Rome*, or at leaſt in *Tully's* writings: the end and purpoſe of which was, to explain to his countrymen, in the moſt perſpicuous manner, whatever the ancients had taught on every article, either of ſpeculative or practical knowledge.

2. *The Romans*, you ſay, *were far from the humour of the Greeks; and did not regard the doctrine of the ſect, that they eſpouſed, as a rule of life, but a kind of furniture onely for their rhetoric ſchools.* But I ſee no ground for this diſtinction; if there was any between them, the *Greeks* were certainly the more diſputatious, and,

agreeably to St. *Paul's* character of them, more curious and fond of *every thing new. Cato*, you ſee, from the teſtimony that you produce, made the *Stoical doctrine his rule of living*; and tho' he is laughed at for it by *Cicero*, yet not for making philoſophy his rule, but that particular philoſophy, which was incompatible with common life.

There is a letter from *Tully* to *Trebatius*, upon his turning Epicurean; in which he rallies him for his new principles, which muſt neceſſarily ſpoil the lawyer, as breaking through all the old forms of ſecuring faith and property amongſt men: and concludes, *that if he was ſerious in the change, he was ſorry for it*; *if to make his court onely to* Panſa, *he excuſed it.* (Fam. l. vii. 12.) This ſhews, that the choice of a ſect was not thought a thing indifferent, but ſuppoſed to operate in life and manners. If then, as *Tully* ſays, a great part took up their philoſophy *diſputandi cauſa, non ita vivendi*; yet this was not the thing generally thought blameable. Nor was it peculiar to the *Romans*, any more than to the *Greeks*, or to any other people, *not to live up to the rule that they profeſſed*; juſt as we ſee it now in the caſe of Religion, which a great part in all countries contend for very warmly, yet practiſe very coldly.

3. You make *the nature of Tully's philoſophy* another ſource of difficulty, in finding out his real ſentiments. His philoſophy was *of the Academy*; and whether of the old or the new, much

the ſame. But when you call it *perfectly ſceptical*, you ſeem to confound it with a different ſect, whoſe diſtinguiſhing character was to *doubt of every thing:* whereas the principle of the academy was onely *to ſuſpend their aſſent*, till by examining all ſides of a queſtion, they could diſcover *the probable*. For in ſpeculative enquiries they diſclaimed *all certainty*; and thought nothing ſo unworthy of a philoſopher, as a *raſh aſſent*, and the embracing for true what he did not comprehend. They imagined truth and falſhood to be ſo mixed and blended by nature, that it was extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, to ſeparate them entirely; that probability was the utmoſt that human wit could arrive at. This therefore they made *their rule*, both of thinking and acting. What the other ſects affirmed with aſſurance, they made it their taſk to confute, or ſhew to be *uncertain*; taking from each ſtill, what they liked, and following it, with this difference onely, that what the others called *true*, they called *probable*.

This, of all others, was the moſt rational way of philoſophizing; ſubjecting them to no maſter, no ſyſtem of opinions; but leaving a liberty to chuſe, after a free enquiry, whatever was found moſt agreeable to reaſon and nature. But what is there in this to create difficulty in diſcovering a man's opinions, whenever he thinks fit to declare them? It might create, perhaps, ſome diffidence in declaring them; and a diſpoſition, to confute rather what others aſſert, than to aſſert any thing of his own: but their rule ſtill was as certain and conſiſtent as of any other ſect; and when perſuaded, of any opinion, they purſued it as regularly, and explained as freely, as any of the reſt.

4. But the *Embarraſs*, you ſay, *is compleated by the peculiar character of the man*; which you conſider in three different capacities, of *the Orator*, *the Stateſman*, *the Philoſopher*; and contend, that he not onely contradicts in one, what he affirms in another, but *is inconſiſtent with himſelf, even when he ſpeaks from one and the ſame perſon:* yet from the beſt attention, that I have been able to pay to his Hiſtory, I find in him but one general, conſiſtent, glorious character, of a great and good man, acting and ſpeaking on all occaſions, what the greateſt prudence, with the greateſt virtue, would ſuggeſt.

As an Orator, it was his buſineſs to enforce, with all the power of eloquence, whatever he thought ſerviceable to his client, and uſeful to the cauſe that he was defending. Of this part he acquitted himſelf with glory; and tells us himſelf, what the nature of the thing would tell us for him, that we are not to expect his real ſentiments here.

As a Stateſman, the caſe is ſtill the ſame. In his harangues to the people he gives a different account, you obſerve, of the ſame fact, from what he had done in the Senate; that is, he adapts his ſtyle and arguments to the different genius of each aſſembly; to engage them both the more effectually to promote the meaſures that he was then purſuing.

As a Philoſopher; if we join the character of an Academic, we ſhall find him equally conſiſtent. For I cannot help agreeing with *Bentley*, in taking this *for the key* of his philoſophical writings, as much as I do with you, in your fixing the time of his changing the Academy. This was the philoſophy that he profeſſed thro' life; and to which he profeſſes himſelf indebted for all his ſucceſs in it: and this clue will lead us through *that labyrinth of contradiction*, which you ſeem to diſcover in his works.

In his book of Divination, you ſay, *he combats all Augury*, but in his book of Laws *declares for it*; *in a manner too ſerious to ſuſpect him of feigning*. Yet all the matter is, that in the one he acts the philoſopher, in the other the ſtateſman: in his treatiſe on Divination, he aſſerts and eſtabliſhes it in the firſt book, in the perſon of his brother, by all the arguments that can be brought for it; and refutes them all in the ſecond, in his own perſon. This is the true ſpirit of the Academy; after examining both ſides, to reject what has nothing ſolid in it. Yet in his *Treatiſe on Laws*, he recommends *Augury*; and no wonder: for though he laughed at it as a philoſopher, he had a great opinion of it as a politician: and always ſpeaks of *the invention of its ceremonies, and the making them part of the civil conſtitution, as an inſtance of the* *greateſt wiſdom and prudence in their anceſtors.* For it was wholly agreeable to that ſcheme of policy, which he conſtantly purſued, from the beginning to the end of life, of throwing the chief influence and balance of power in ſtate matters into the hands of the better ſort.

Again, you take notice, that *in his book on the nature of the Gods*, he reflects on thoſe, *as too curious or impertinent*, who were calling upon him on all occaſions to declare his own opinion: *Qui autem requirunt, quid quaque de re ipſi ſentiamus, curioſius id faciunt, quam neceſſe eſt.* (l. i. § 5.) yet *in his Academic Queſtions*, he ſwears, *that he always ſpeaks what he thinks: Jurarem—me et ardere ſtudio veri reperiendi, et ea ſentire, quæ dicerem.* (l. iv. § 10.) In the firſt of theſe works, he profeſſes onely to collect what the old philoſophers had taught; and, according to the method of the Academy, to combat the opinion of one ſect, with that of another, without declaring his own: ſo that the difficulty of diſcovering it is not owing here, as you intimate, *to any obſcurity* in deliving it, but to his not delivering it at all. But *in the Academic Queſtions*, as far as I can underſtand, the paſſage without the context to aſſiſt me, he does not ſwear, as you render it, *that he always ſpeaks what he thinks*, but onely, that *he thinks what he is there ſpeaking:* and if ſo, it confirms what I have been ſaying of the Academy, and its being *the true key of his ſentiments.*

But you aſſert, *that his ſentiments are not to be* *be collected from any of his writings, that were deſigned for the public, which include all but his Letters, becauſe, in all his writings of that kind, he affected an obſcurity.* This is the firſt time that I have ever ſeen the character of *obſcure* applied to *Tully's* writings: ſurely no man's ſtyle was ever farther removed from it, or more remarkably ſhining and perſpicuous, than his. But the whole charge of obſcurity, and all the contraſt of ſentiments found in different parts of his works may eaſily be ſolved, by conſidering onely the different circumſtances in which they were delivered. By attending to this, we ſhall find his very contradictions to be conſiſtencies, and nothing elſe but what was prudent and proper to be ſaid by one and the ſame man; acting the different parts of the *Orator*, *the Stateſman*, *the Philoſopher*.

To come then at laſt to the principal point in queſtion; the diſcovery of *his real thoughts concerning a future ſtate, which are to be collected onely*, you ſay, *from his Epiſtles*. And ſo far I agree, that in familiar letters we may expect to find him more open and undiſguiſed, and, as far as he touches any ſubject, treating it with leſs reſerve, than in works deſigned for the public: yet all his Letters, as you allow, are not of this ſort: in many of them it was his buſineſs to ſay, not ſo much what was true, as what would pleaſe. But let us ſee what he has actually ſaid in the teſtimonies that you have produced from them. In a letter to *Atticus*,

(l. iv. 10.) *Sed de illa ambulatione, fors viderit, aut ſi qui eſt, qui curet, deus.* To *Torquatus*, (Ep. fam. l. vi. 3.) *Sed hæc conſolatio levis eſt: illa gravior, qua te uti ſpero, ego certe utor: nec dum ero, angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa; et ſi non ero, ſenſu omnino carebo.* Again, (ib. iv.) *Deinde quod mihi ad conſolationem commune tecum eſt, ſi jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea republica avellar, qua carendum eſſe doleam, præſertim, cum id ſine ullo ſenſu futurum ſit.* To *Toranius*, (ib. xxi.) *Cum conſilio profici nihil poſſit, una ratio videtur, quicquid evenerit, ferre moderate, præſertim, cum omnium rerum mors ſit extremum. Nothing,* you ſay, *can be more expreſs than theſe paſſages againſt a future ſtate: and that* Tully *ſpeaks in them his real ſentiments, there is not the leaſt room to doubt. They were letters of conſolation to his friends, when he himſelf, by reaſon of the ill ſtate of public affairs, moſt wanted conſolation.*

As to the firſt of theſe paſſages; you allow it to be *a compliment to the philoſophy of his friend Atticus*, who was an Epicurean: and why is it not ſo too in the reſt? In the firſt to *Torquatus*, as in that to *Atticus*, the caſe is put hypothetically *ſi non ero:* and the very uſe of ſuch a topic in conſolation, implies, that theſe friends alſo were Epicureans, and that he was adminiſtring comfort from their philoſophy, not his own, as likely to have the more weight with them; or arguing, as we ſay, *ad hominem*, not expreſſing his real ſentiments.

But as this is onely conjectural, and, as ſome may think, contrary to fact; let us try what other defence can be made, and what uſe in this caſe of our *Key of the Academy.* Though I have often reflected on theſe paſſages, yet my notion has always been, that *Tully did believe a future ſtate.* The whole turn of his writings, and the tenor of his life, ſhew it: he lived expecting it, and always ſo as to deſerve it; and declares it to be *a favorite opinion*, which, though poſſibly an error, he was reſolved to indulge. But we muſt remember ſtill, that he was an Academic; that is, that he believed it onely to *be probable*; and as probability neceſſarily admits the degrees of *more and leſs*, ſo it admits a variety likewiſe in the ſtability of our perſuaſion: and as *Tully* himſelf ſays, on another occaſion, *Quis autem eſt, tanta quidem de re, quin varie ſecum ipſe diſputet?* In a melancholy hour, when the ſpirits are low, and the mind under a dejection, an argument appears in a very different light; objections acquire ſtrength; and what humours the preſent chagrin, finds the readieſt admiſſion. Theſe paſſages were evidently of this kind, written in his deſponding moments; and, as you ſay, *when he himſelf moſt wanted conſolation.* And if we allow them therefore to expreſs what he really thought at the time, yet they prove nothing more, than that *he ſometimes doubted of what he generally believed*; conſiſtently with the character and principles of an Academic, who embraced *no opinions as certain.*

Thus, Sir, I have given you my free thoughts on what you were ſo good as to communicate with regard to *Tully:* I will not be anſwerable for the exactneſs of them; they are ſuch onely as my recollection could furniſh, without the help of *Tully's* works to refreſh, or any teſtimonies to ſupport them. But as I reſerve the more exact conſideration of this argument to the part of *Tully's* life, which was the moſt employed on philoſophy, under *Cæſar's* tyranny, ſo I ſhall be obliged to you for imparting any further thoughts on the ſubject, either to confirm or confute what I have here offered: and if any occaſion of books or friends ſhould invite you again this winter to *Cambridge*, where I propoſe to be about *Michaelmas*, I beg you to be aſſured, that no man will be more ready to ſerve you, in any manner there, or better pleaſed to enjoy as much of your company, as your time and other friends will allow to,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

P. S. I ſhould be glad to hear that your great work goes on ſucceſsfully; and, as a ſure omen of ſatisfying others, that you find more and more ſatisfaction from it yourſelf. When I was laſt in *London*, I met with a little piece, written with the ſame view, and on the ſame plan with yours, an anonymous letter from *Geneva*, evincing *the divine Miſſion of* Moſes, *from the inſtitu-*

tion of the Sabbatic year. The author ſets out, like you, from this ſingle Poſtulatum, that *Moſes was a conſummate Lawgiver*; and ſhews, that he could never have injoined a law *ſo whimſical, impolitic, and hazardous*; *expoſing the people to certain famine, as oft as the preceding or following year proved barren*; *if He, who has all nature at command, had not warranted the ſucceſs of it.* The Letter is ingenious and ſprightly, and dreſſes out, in a variety of colours, the abſurdity of the inſtitution, on the ſuppoſition of its being human. It is in *French*, and publiſhed in *Bibliotheque Germanique*, Tom. xxx.

But will not this gaiety of cenſuring the law be found too adventurous, and expoſe *your Poſtulatum itſelf* to ſome hazard? Eſpecially when there is *a fact*, generally allowed by the learned, that ſeems to overturn all this ſpecious reaſoning at once; *viz. that this law of the Sabbatic year was never obſerved.* For if ſo, it may be objected, with ſome ſhew of reaſon, that *Moſes* had charged himſelf with the iſſue of events too delicate, and beyond his reach, and imprudently injoined what uſe and experience ſhewed to be impracticable.

I am apprehenſive likewiſe, that your work will not ſtand wholly clear of objections: your ſcheme, as I take it, is to ſhew, that *ſo able a man as* Moſes *could not poſſibly have omitted the doctrine of a future ſtate, thought ſo neceſſary to Government by all other Legiſlators, had he not done it by the expreſs direction of the Deity*; *and that under the miracu-*

miracalous diſpenſations of the Theocracy, he could neither want it himſelf for the enforcing a reſpect to his laws, nor yet the people for the encouragement of their obedience. But what was the conſequence? Why, the people were perpetually apoſtatizing either to the ſuperſtitions of *Egypt*, or the idolatries of *Canaan*; and tired with the load of their ceremonies, wholly dropped them at laſt, and ſunk into all kinds of vice and profaneneſs; till the Prophets, in order to revive and preſerve a ſenſe of Religion amongſt them, began to preach up the rational duties of Morality, and inſinuate *the doctrine of a future ſtate.*

As in the other caſe then, ſome may be apt to ſay, that *Moſes* had inſtituted what could not be practiſed without ruin to the State; ſo in this, that he had overlooked, what could not be omitted without ruin to Religion.

I have taken the liberty to propoſe theſe hints, that, if you think them of weight, you may be better prepared to obviate them; if not, may proceed the more ſecurely by ſeeing reaſon to ſlight them. As for myſelf, I can ſafely ſwear with *Tully*, that I have *a moſt ardent deſire to find out the truth*: but as I have generally been diſappointed in my enquiries, and more ſucceſsful in finding what is falſe than what is true, ſo I begin, like him too, to grow a mere Academic, humbly content to take up with the *probable*. Whatever you have to offer me of this kind, I ſhall thankfully embrace; and though I expect as much from you as I do from any man, yet, in the arduous ſubject on which you are engaged, I dare not venture to raiſe my expectations any higher.

LETTER II.

Cambridge, Nov. 30, 1736.

Dear Sir,

ON my return to *Cambridge*, my firſt and beſt entertainment was to find a long letter from you; which will ever give me pleaſure in proportion to its bulk. I am much obliged to you for your friendly acceptance and conſtruction of the freedom with which I treated your Diſſertation on *Tully's* Philoſophy, as well as of what I ventured to intimate in relation to your greater work. By your large view of both ſubjects you have ſet me right in ſome particulars, which I had advanced too haſtily and applied improperly; but I have neither leiſure nor ability at preſent to enter into a detail of them, as well for the arrear of buſineſs in which a long abſence has involved me, as for a particular diſorder and flux of rheum in my eyes, which diſables me in great meaſure either from reading or writing, and makes it even difficult to diſcharge this preſent duty towards you. I muſt refer myſelf for a free diſcuſſion of all particulars to that perſonal conference, which you are ſo good as to promiſe ſome time after Chriſtmas, which I ſhall enjoy with great ſatisfaction, and expect with equal impatience.

I ſaw our friend *******, as I paſſed through *London*, whoſe thoughts ſeem to be more employed on moral and religious ſubjects, than on puſhing his fortune in his profeſſion; in which I wiſh him all ſucceſs, for I take him to be an honeſt and deſerving man. He profeſſes himſelf a warm believer of Chriſtianity; I am ſorry that it is on no better grounds, than what you mention: for it is in opinions, as in eſtates; our poſſeſſion gives a preſumption of a good title, till the diſcovery of it oft betrays the weakneſs of the tenure. The lives and characters of the Fathers are more likely, in my opinion, to ſhake a ſettled, than confirm a wavering faith. For notorious weakneſs will in many caſes diſcredit a teſtimony as effectually, as notorious wickedneſs: and we generally find but too much reaſon, in the moſt eſteemed of them, to charge either the one or the other. Our ingenious friend ******** has, as you obſerve, rightly charged the ſource of infidelity on the miraculous hiſtory of each Teſtament: yet our Divines are continually haranguing upon it, as reflecting nothing but luſtre and brightneſs on the evidences of both. But we need not wonder at the raſhneſs of our ordinary Divines, when the great *Rogers* has declared, as I remember, in one of his ſermons, that he could not believe the truth of *Moſes's* pretenſions, were it not for the confirmation given to them by the Goſpel. This I take to be a dangerous aſſertion, that ſaps the very foundations of Chriſtianity; and ſuperſedes at once the whole purpoſe of your intended work, by denying any original or intrinſic character of Divinity to the inſtitution of *Moſes*. The pleaſure that I have in correſponding with many worthy and ingenious friends in different parts of the kingdom, has oft ſuggeſted a wiſh to me, that a club could be inſtituted of ſuch, who are uſed to think, and able to write, for the diſcovery and defence of truth on every ſubject, that affects either private or public life, without regard to any party or intereſt whatſoever. But the difficulty is to find a ſet of men ſo independent and diſintereſted, as to be qualified to engage in ſuch a cauſe, or indeed, to find a ſociety that would bear them. The deſign, however, in the corruption even of theſe times, if executed with prudence, and with due reſpect to the government and conſtitution, might be of great ſervice towards mitigating the indiſcreet fierceneſs and prejudices both of Zealots and Sceptics, which ſeem likely in ſome time to endanger the public quiet.

As to the life of *Cicero*, I hope to get thro' the firſt rough draught of it by the next ſpring: but then to reviſe, correct, and digeſt it all to my mind; and eſpecially to read over all his works, as I intend, for that purpoſe, will employ another year, before I can offer it to the public.

I hope your next letter will bring the confirmation of your promiſed viſit to our Univerſity, and fix a ſhort day for our expecting you, where I ſhall always be proud to teſtify, that I really am, what I profeſs myſelf to be,

Dear Sir,
Your faithful friend,
and ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER III.

Camb. April 9, 1737.

Dear Sir,

THO' I find myſelf in no ſmall hurry on the approach of my journey to *London*, whither I propoſe to ſet forward on *Monday* or *Tueſday*, yet I was reſolved to ſnatch a moment for the payment of my thanks for your late obliging letters, as well as the journal, that came to my hands ſoon after the date of my laſt.— I had before ſeen the force of your critical genius, very ſucceſsfully employed on *Shakeſpear*, but did not know that you had ever tried it on the *Latin* authors. I am pleaſed with ſeveral of your emendations, and tranſcribed them into the margin of my editions, though not equally with them all. It is a laudable and liberal amuſement, to try now and then in our reading the ſucceſs of a conjecture; but in the preſent ſtate of the generality of old writers, it can hardly be thought a ſtudy fit to employ a life upon; at leaſt, not worthy, I am ſure, of your talents and induſtry, which, inſtead of trifling on words, ſeem calculated rather to correct the opinions and manners of the world.

As to the *Plain Account*; I heard *Whiſton* ſay, that he told the Queen, that the Biſhop did not underſtand the nature of the Sacrament ſo well now, as when ſixteen years old. But for my part, I have not, I own, ſo contemptible a notion of the performance. We may obſerve through all ages, that there never was any rite or practice in the Church, derived from the Goſpel, that in the courſe of a few years was not ſo perverted from its primitive uſe, as to want to be recalled to its firſt principles, and ſet right again by the original rule. The Author takes this to be the caſe of the Sacrament, and ſeems to have reaſon, not onely from the practice of this, but even of the earlieſt times of which we have any notice. For example: all his adverſaries appeal to *Juſtin Martyr*, who wrote within fifty years of St. *John*, for a genuin account of the matter. Yet in his time we find, that after conſecration, *the Deacons diſtributed the Bread and the Cup of Wine, mixed with Water, and carried portions to the Abſent.* [Apol. i. p. 96. edit Thirl.] *Irenæus* declares *the mixture of water* to be the inſtitution of Chriſt himſelf, [l. iv. c. 57. l. v. 2, 36.] and when ſome afterwards began to diſpute and reject it, *Cyprian* affirmed it to be injoined to him by a *ſpecial revelation from Heaven* [Ep. ad Cæcil. lxiii.] And *Theophylact* on his Comment on *John* xix. ſays, *pudeſiant Armenii, qui aquàm non miſcent.* This may ſhew how little we are to depend on Antiquity in the caſe before us. I have no time to add more, but that I intend to return to *Cambridge* before the end of *May*, where I ſhall be heartily glad to receive you, and on all occaſions to ſignify, that I am, with great truth, dear Sir,

Sincerely yours,

C. M.

LETTER IV.

Camb. Sept. 22, 1737.

Dear Sir,

I Began to be impatient to hear of your health, and what you were doing, till I received your laſt kind letter: and if there was occaſion for any apology on your part, it could onely be, for not favouring me with it ſooner. I ſhall always be deſirous to ſhew any reſpect to your Friends; for that character with me will be a ſure proof of their merit: but Dr. *Tailor* ſeems to be one of thoſe few, who want no Teſtimonial, and whoſe ingenuous behaviour and converſation will eaſily recommend him to the eſteem of men of ſenſe. Pray let him know, that I think myſelf obliged to him for his kind remembrance of me, and ſhould be glad of any opportunity of cultivating his friendſhip.

The Life of *Cicero* proceeds but ſlowly, thro' many interruptions and avocations: I had an unexpected one lately, by a ſudden call to *London*, to look after the Maſterſhip of the Charter-houſe; having been mentioned for it, without my application, by Sir *Robert*, and ſome other Great ones: but on my arrival in town I preſently perceived, that the D. of *Newcaſtle* had been before hand with them, in ſecuring it for one Mr. *Mann*, an old friend and companion of Lord *Godolphin*. So that I returned, as I have been forced to do before, with a few good words from thoſe, who can as eaſily give good things. I have made however a conſiderable progreſs in my work; and am drawing it out into a legible form; and at your next viſit to us, hope to give you a peruſal of the whole, or at leaſt of a great part of it. But as I find ſome difficulty in pleaſing myſelf with it, I ſhall not be in haſte to ſend it abroad; though whenever I do publiſh, am ſtill inclined, as you and other friends have adviſed me, to print it by ſubſcription.

I promiſe myſelf in the mean time much entertainment from your firſt volume: and, if you carry it to the Preſs yourſelf, ſhall expect that you make *Cambridge* your way, and take up your quarters with us; where on all occaſions you will be as welcome as at home, and for any time that you find convenient. I am pleaſed with the manner of your addreſs to the Free-thinkers, and obliged to you for your friendly intentions with regard to myſelf: and though I ſhould be as proud to have the teſtimony of your judgement and good opinion as of any man, yet I would have you conſider, how far ſuch a declaration of it may expoſe you to a ſhare of that envy, which has lain and ſtill lies very heavy upon me.

I have never once looked in the Review, *&c.* the maxim, that you mention from it, is agreeable to the principles of the Author, and to make poſſeſſion and eſtabliſhments a teſt of truth, the ſure way to baniſh reaſon and inquiry out of ſociety. If from particular and national ſocieties, we extend his rule to the univerſal one of mankind, what would become of Chriſtianity itſelf, if a majority or novelty muſt be the criterion of true and falſe? we ſhould have nothing left, but to join with *Tindale*, and maintain it to be *as old as the Creation.*

I am, Sir,
Your affect. friend
and ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER V.

Feb. 8, 1737-8.

Dear Sir,

I Deferred my thanks for your laſt obliging letter, till I could pay them at the ſame time for the kind preſent which you there promiſed, and which I have ſince received. But I have been forced ſtill to defer them much longer than I intended, by a cruel diſorder of my eyes, which ſeized me unluckily juſt before the publication of your Book, and quite diſabled me from reading it; though, by the help of borrowed eyes, I have at laſt got through it. When *Tully's* writings were firſt ſpread through the world after his death, a ſpring broke out in one of his favourite Villa's, which was found excellent for weak eyes, and thought to be providentially ſupplied to aſſiſt towards the reading of his works. I wiſh that Providence, in whoſe cauſe you are more ſpecially engaged, had furniſhed the ſame help to facilitate the lecture of your writings. I flatter myſelf, however, that my blindneſs is not of the judicial kind; ſince no man, I am ſure, was either more deſirous to read, or more willing to be convinced by you than myſelf; and though, by my unhappy diſability, I have loſt ſome ſhare of the pleaſure, and perhaps of the conviction, which I ſhould otherwiſe have received from your book, yet I reſolve to make it up, by a more conſiderate and attentive peruſal, as ſoon as my eyes will allow me: I beg leave in the mean while to aſſure you, that I found it very entertaining, very ingenious, very learned.

This would be ſatisfaction enough to the generality of Authors, whoſe end of writing is not ſo much truth, as praiſe: but that, I know, was not yours, or at leaſt your primary end; for a writer of your genius will be allowed without that imputation, to enliven a dry ſubject with the embelliſhments of learning. I have the pleaſure alſo to tell you, that I am exactly of your mind in your notion of *moral obligations*; as well as in the two capital propoſitions of your book, *That the doctrine of a future ſtate is highly uſeful to ſociety*; and, *That Magiſtrates have always inculcated it for the ſake of that utility.* How much farther you will carry me I cannot promiſe, I wiſh it may be to the end; if not, I ſhall not charge it either to your fault or my own: for we are told by great authority, *That it is as neceſſary for the mind to yield to the evidence of what it perceives, as the balance to the weight*; and *impoſſible for it not to judge of things accordingly as they appear to it*; and we learn from daily experience, that different tempers and capacities form different judgements of the ſame thing: ſo that while my academic complexion leaves me groveling perhaps in the mire of doubt, or purſuing the faint track of probability,

bility, your more ſanguin ſpirits, like the greater Myſteries, make you at once an *Autoptes*, and admit you to the joyous regions of clear day and intuition. But I cannot help attending to what, as *Cicero* tells me, a *Sicilian* wagg, *Epicharmus*, whiſpers, *Be on your guard, and do not believe, for thoſe are the nerves of your mind:* but leſt you ſhould ſuſpect that I follow onely Pagan authority, *Clemens* of *Alexandria* quotes the ſame paſſage, and adds, either from himſelf, or perhaps ſome better writer, that *incredulity has done much good in the world, credulity much evil.*

But to return to your book; as I have told you with great truth that it pleaſes me in general very highly, ſo I think it the part of a friend to acquaint you with ſome little objections, which I have either heard from others, or obſerved to it myſelf. Some take notice, that you treat the Free-thinkers too roughly, and that your addreſs to them is a defiance rather and declaration of war, than an invitation to a conference; not likely therefore to conciliate their favour or attention, which ought to be the care of one who profeſſes to write for their conviction.——Ld. *Shaftſbury's* raillery on Mr. *Locke* does not ſeem ſtrange to me; a Philoſopher, who at parting with life has nothing to preach but *its vanity*, certainly makes a poor figure, by ſhewing that he was deceived in the end, and miſtaken in the uſe of it; and not that life itſelf, but that his pretenſions to Philoſophy were vain.——We are at a loſs to know, why you rank the *Old-Whig* among the *Infidel writers*; we conſider him as writing onely on diſſenting principles, againſt teſts and eſtabliſhments, and ſuppoſe *C——r* or *F——r* to be the editor, who have not been thought enemies to revealed Religion. For want of taking notes in running through your book, and the preſent bad ſtate of my eyes, I cannot recover the paſſages where I ſeemed to ſtick a little; I ſhall mention therefore but one or two which my memory ſupplies. You will be cenſured perhaps for condemning the famed paſſage of *Joſephus* ſo roundly, upon a principle, which will hardly be found to be true, *viz. the unſociable nature of that Religion*, not allowing a communion with any other: but *Whiſton*, you know, makes *Joſephus a Chriſtian Biſhop*; and though you will laugh here at the old man, as I myſelf alſo do, yet what will you ſay to the uncontested teſtimony of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, which aſſerts, *That all the firſt Chriſtian Biſhops of Jeruſalem, through a perpetual ſucceſſion of fifteen, to the final deſtruction of the city by Hadrian, were circumciſed Jews.*

By emending a paſſage of *Tully*, you make him condemn *the ignorance of their anceſtors, and ſuperſtition of the Prieſts, in the eſtabliſhment of their Religion*; and refer to it afterwards as to a ſenſe allowed and certain: yet, as far as I can remember of his real ſentiments and conſtant profeſſions through all his writings, he perpe-

tually applauds the wiſe inſtitution of their religious rites, as admirably adapted to the genius of their government and ſervice of the ſtate. I am,
Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend,

and ſervant,

C. M.

LETTER VI.

Camb. Nov. 18, 1738.

Dear Sir,

I Am obliged to you for your kind inquiry after my health; my eyes are ſomewhat better than they have been, which is no ſmall comfort in my preſent taſk of writing; but in truth I may thank myſelf in great meaſure for what I ſuffer from them, and while I am teazing them every day beyond their ſtrength, cannot reaſonably complain, if they often make me ſmart for it. I have been thinking however ſometimes to try the experiment which you adviſe, and deſire therefore at your leiſure to have the receipt of your Tobacco; though *ex fumo dare lucem*, ſeems to be an attempt too bold for one of my age. I have now an amanuenſis with me tranſcribing my *Tully*, and might be ready for the preſs in the ſpring, could I prevail with myſelf to part with it ſo ſoon; if I keep it ſtill longer, it is not becauſe I am fond of it, but becauſe it does not yet pleaſe me; for whenever it does, I ſhall be glad to get rid of it. My friends in the mean while begin to be preſſing for it, and adviſe a ſubſcription, to which I ſeem now determined, eſpecially as I have got an additional charge upon me ſince I ſaw you, two ſmall girls, about eight years old, who are now in the houſe with me, left by an unfortunate brother, who had nothing elſe to leave; but they are fine children, and have gained already ſo much upon our affections, that inſtead of being a burthen, we begin to think them a bleſſing to us; my ſubſcription therefore is like to be of the charitable kind, and *Tully* to be their portion. I begin to think of printing at this place, where it will be moſt convenient to me, and where we have a ſyndicate on foot to regulate the Preſs, and bring it again into credit and order; and my neighbour *Thurlbourn*, whom I am diſpoſed alſo to oblige, has been making propoſals to me. But I ſhall not think of taking any reſolution, till I can compute the ſize and charge of printing my work, and ſee a little forward into the liſt of ſubſcribers; as far as I can gueſs at preſent, it will make a large volume in 4to, which, being handſomely printed, may demand a guinea for the ſubſcription price. You will never be forgiven for your preference of the INTERNAL evidence, for that brings Reaſon into the controverſy, which our old champions would gladly diſcard, finding teſtimony and authority, like the cudgel or quarter-ſtaff, the ſureſt weapons to beat off, or knock down an adverſary. But I did not expect to hear that Biſhops begin to rank you on the ſide of the enemy, though nothing is ſtrange from ſuch a Biſhop, who has juſt learning enough to make his want of ſenſe onely the more conſpicuous.— I wiſh that you would ſpend ſome part of the winter among us at *Cambridge*, where I ſhould be glad to have your judgement on the ſeveral parts of *Cicero's* life: we keep up a regular meeting every night at the coffee-houſe, which is the onely hour which I ſpend agreeably out of my own houſe: Mr. ***, who charges me to repay his compliments, adds no ſmall life to the company, but the pleaſure of it would be much heightened by the benefit of your converſation. My amanuenſis leads me on ſo faſt that I can hardly keep pace with him, if I give him any ſtart; for as he writes I reviſe, and inſert all the authorities. I can onely add our joint good wiſhes for your health and proſperity, and am with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,

and ſervant,

C. M.

LETTER VII.

Camb. Sept. 4, 1739.

Dear Sir,

I Should have paid my thanks long ago for your laſt kind letter, but that I have been extremely buſy, and ſtill am ſo, in finiſhing my book for the preſs, whither I ſhall certainly commit it, about the middle of the next month. I am obliged to you for my right reverend ſubſcriber, and the more ſo, for the pains that it coſt you to draw him in. Epiſcopal gold, like that from the royal hand, may help to cure the Evil, with which I am ſaid to be infected. I have now got fifteen of that bench, one or two of whom were even my ſolicitors, but could not perſuade ſome of the reſt, that my work was not levelled againſt Religion. This notion has been ſtrongly inculcated, and when in the converſation, that I mentioned (with the A. B.) I took occaſion to urge the folly, as well as malice of it, it was anſwered, that though it might prove falſe, yet it did not appear to be malicious, ſince the *Life of Homer* might juſtly give a handle to ſuſpect the *Life of Tully.*

I can eaſily imagine, that you have ſuffered in the opinion of that perſon, and many others of the ſame ſtamp, for your charitable opinion of me; but the free manner with which you treat certain characters and opinions, which paſs for ſacred with all ſuch, is your fundamental and unpardonable crime, and the reſt but overt acts of a ſecret malice and miſchievous intent in it. You deſpiſe that roundneſs of their ſyſtems into which they have collected all the ſubſtantials of Religion, and by breaking through the circle threaten to diſſolve the charm. How can a Prelate, who in his primary viſitation made it his care to recommend the *Miſcellany* to all the clergy, ever reliſh an author of your genius, whoſe end, as well as manner of writing, is juſt the reverſe of that ſcribbler's, to purſue truth, wherever you find it, and from the midſt of ſmoak and darkneſs to ſpread light and day around you? You will hardly mend the matter, as you ſay, by defending Mr. *Pope*; for tho' it be an act of juſtice, and a taſk of all others the moſt laudable, to defend a ſhining character when injuriouſly attacked, and though it will ſhew the ingenuity, learning, and good taſte of the author, yet it will not be thought a clerical work, ſuch as your *St—s* and *Ch—s* attempt, all whoſe polemical fire and artillery are levelled againſt the enemies of the Church; and a ſtupid book againſt *Morgan*, or a defence of the Fathers, eſpecially where they cannot be defended, are the ſure means of making a man, firſt a chaplain, and at laſt perhaps an Archbiſhop. No, my friend, as long as you can love a man, becauſe he is amiable, and think him honeſt, who is not perhaps orthodox, or a lover of truth, who hates a pious fraud and ſanctified lie, you may enjoy the comfort of a good conſcience and good company; but muſt not expect, after a life of virtue and ſtudy, to ſlumber in the ſtalls, and refreſh your old age in the ſunſhine of the Church. Pray preſent our beſt wiſhes and compliments to Dr. *Tailor*, whether married or unmarried, and accept the ſame to yourſelf, from,

Dear Sir,
Your faithful
and obedient ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER VIII.

Camb. Jan. 7, 1739-40.

Dear Sir,

I Have been a ſhameful time in your debt for a kind and agreeable letter, for which I have no other excuſe to make, but that I have been forced of late to take the ſame liberty with all my friends, and content myſelf with the leſs honorable part, of receiving favours inſtead of giving.

I thank you for the preſent of your vindication of Mr. *Pope*, which my wife read over to me with much pleaſure to us both, and with that ſatisfaction which your works will always give you friends, of ſeeing you triumph over your adverſaries.——You have evinced the orthodoxy of Mr. *Pope's* principles, but, like the old commentators on his *Homer*, will be thought perhaps in ſome places to have provided a meaning for him, that he himſelf never dreamt of. However, if you did not find him a philoſopher, you will make him one, for he will be wiſe enough to take the benefit of your reading, and make his future Eſſays more clear and conſiſtent. It was certainly a generous part in you, and worthy a man of capacity and leiſure, to vindicate a writer of his genius, to whom the publick is ſo highly indebted, from the groundleſs cavils of a dull critic, which Mr. *Pope's* name and not his own had ſpread into every body's hands. I have been employing myſelf very diligently on the laſt part of my work, the review of *Cicero's* character and opinions, *&c.* where, as it ſeemed to fall in my way, to ſay ſomething by way of note on the article you wrote of, ſo I have taken the opportunity of ſaying what I think ſufficient, yet no more than what the ſubject naturally led me to. I think you much in the right to take no farther notice of *W*——*r*, you have done him too much honor already, by letting him ſee that he can warm you. But I ſhall not be diſpleaſed to ſee you give the whole tribe of them that juſt correction in your preface, which your maſterly hand is ſo well able to diſpenſe. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

C. M.

LETTER IX.

May 8, 1740.

Dear Sir,

I Am obliged to you for the favour of your kind letter, and much pleaſed with your excurſion to *Twickenham*, which abounds with every thing, I know, that can make the ſcene agreeable to a man of taſte, both within and without doors. I thank you for doing me juſtice to Mr. *Pope* and Mr. *Lyttelton*, and repreſenting me in that very light, in which I deſire, and ſhall ever endeavour, to appear to men of probity and good ſenſe, of what party ſoever they may be; for I am perſuaded, that there are ſuch men to be found in all parties. I do not recollect how I could ever anſwer an invitation from Mr. *Pope* in a ſlight manner, whoſe character would make ſuch a behaviour ridiculous in any man. I have always had a very high opinion of his ſhining and ſingular abilities; but from the prejudices, conceived againſt me by many of his friends, on the account of my writings, as well as my engagements to Lord *Hervey*, I have had reaſon to believe, that he alſo has been induced, to think me leſs worthy of his good opinion, than he had once imagined. I am ſorry for your particular loſs in Biſhop *Hare*, whom I have always taken to be a real encourager of learning, as well as a learned man; a character, that will not eaſily be replaced that bench. But the comfort is, that learning is a branch of virtue, that never fails to carry its reward with it; of which you have ſuch a ſhare, as you would not exchange, I dare ſay, for the beſt preferment in the kingdom. This is a ſatisfaction which I feel every day in my ſtudy, in the want of all preferment; that I can live after my own way, without attending levees, and expoſing myſelf to diſappointments, or ſacrificing, what is of all things the moſt precious to a declining life, my time to a vain ambition. The elder Mr. *Yorke*, with his tutor *Salter*, left us ſuddenly upon a ſummons to town, where you will probably take an opportunity to wait upon him. Pray contrive to ſee us on your return, and ſpend as much time with us as you can; where you may aſſure yourſelf, of being always heartily welcome to, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend
and ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER X.

Camb. Jan. 8, 1740-1.

Dear Sir,

THE ſhort day which my Bookſeller has fixed for the publication of my *Cicero*, has thrown me into no ſmall hurry, to provide all things ready on my ſide before the end of this month; I hear from all friends, that you are not leſs aſſiduous in puſhing forward your work; and as I propoſe to be in *London* in *February*, heartily wiſh, that it may be in ſuch forwardneſs, as to call you thither alſo about the ſame time.

Our people here have juſt got ſome notice of my letter to the A—b—p, which is ſpread, as uſual, through the Univerſity. His Grace, it ſeems, ſhewed it lately to Dr. *M—y*, who gave a particular account of it to a Fellow of *Sidney*, but with no intimation of any reflection made upon it either by his Grace or the Doctor, which is the whole that I have yet learnt of it. My firſt comfort is, from the reſerve obſerved about it, after ſhewing it to enemies, that they are at a loſs how to draw any thing from it to my diſadvantage, and for the reſt I am perfectly eaſy. The Church has received a great loſs by the death of Dr. *W——d*. I cannot ſay an irreparable one, whilſt *C——n* lives; to whom he has left ſome unfiniſhed papers *on Infant Communion*, and wiſely ordered all the reſt to be burnt; he has bequeathed likewiſe to the College, ſuch of his printed books, as they find ſcribbled by his own hand, for ſuch, I hear, is his own deſcription of them. By the ſilence of the public papers, upon the fall of ſo eminent a luminary, we are to expect, I imagine, in a proper time, ſome labored panegyric from a maſterly hand. Though the great *Hooker* ſeems to have exhauſted himſelf in an effort of the laſt week, to do juſtice to the character of the excellent *Euſebius*, who is preparing to give the *Coup de grace* to that ſubtle and ingenious, but infamous writer, the moral Philoſopher.—But as to *W——d*, whenever they think fit to oblige the public with his life, they will not forget one ſtory, I hope, which is truly worthy of him, ſhews the real ſpirit of the man, and which I can venture to tell you on good authority. In his laſt journey from *Cambridge* to *London*, being attended by Dr. *P——e*, and *C——n* the Surgeon, he lodged the ſecond night at *Hodſden*, where, being obſerved to have been coſtive on the road, he was adviſed to have a clyſter, to which he conſented. The Apothecary was preſently ſent for, to whom Dr. *P——e* gave his orders below ſtairs, while Dr. *W——d* continued above; upon which the Apothecary could not forbear expreſſing his great ſenſe of the honor which he received, in being called to the aſſiſtance of ſo celebrated a perſon, whoſe writings he was well acquainted with; the company ſignified ſome ſurprize to find a country Apothecary ſo learned; but he aſſured them, that he was no ſtranger to the merit and character of the Doctor, but had lately read his ingenious book with much pleaſure, *The Divine Legation of Moſes*; Dr. *P——e* and a Fellow of *Magdalen* there preſent, took pains to convince the Apothecary of his miſtake, while *C——n* ran up ſtairs with an account of his blunder to *W——d*, who, provoked by it into a violent paſſion, called the poor fellow a puppy, and blockhead, who muſt needs be ignorant in his profeſſion, and unfit to adminiſter any thing to him, and might poſſibly poiſon his bowels; and notwithſtanding Dr. *P——e's* endeavours to moderate his diſpleaſure, by repreſenting the expediency of the operation, and the man's capacity to perform it, he would hear nothing in his favour, but ordered him to be diſcharged, and poſtponed the benefit of the clyſter till he reached his next ſtage. With ſuch wretched paſſions and prejudices did this poor man march to his grave, which might deſerve to be laughed at, rather than lamented, if we did not ſee what pernicious influence they have in the Church, to defame and depreſs men of ſenſe and virtue, who have had the courage to deſpiſe them.

I am, with true eſteem, and our joint wiſhes of many happy years,

Dear Sir,
Your affect. friend
and ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER XI.

Camb. April 5, 1741.

Dear Sir,

I Returned to *Cambridge* on *Friday* laſt, where I had no ſooner been welcomed by the affectionate ſalutations of my family, than I received the additional pleaſure of your kind letter. I was quite tired of the town before I left it, and called ſometimes at *Gyles's* in hopes of being refreſhed by the expectation of your arrival; but you reſolve, I perceive, to make your appearance firſt by proxy, and to oblige the world with the entertainment which it impatiently expects, from the publication of your ſecond volume; to which I heartily wiſh all the ſucceſs that you deſire, or what, I am perſuaded, is ſtill more, all that it will really merit. —I am obliged to you for your congratulation on the favorable reception of my work, which has anſwered indeed all my wiſhes; and you will readily believe, that I eſteem it as a particular honour, that it has merited the approbation of your friends, Mr. *Pope* and Mr. *Lyttelton*, with whom I ſpent a very agreeable afternoon at Mr. *Murray's*, where they both joined in ſtrong expreſſions of their friendſhip and eſteem of you. As to the circumſtance, from which you draw ſo juſt and uſeful a leſſon, of our differing from each other in ſome particular opinions, as I was always perſuaded, that it could not have any other effect upon you, ſo I have the comfort to aſſure you, that I never felt the leaſt impreſſion from it, diſadvantageous to our friendſhip; it is the neceſſary conſequence of that privilege of our nature, on which all men of ſenſe ſet the higheſt value, the liberty of judging for ourſelves; yet, ſince it would be a great ſatisfaction to me in all caſes, to find my judgement confirmed by yours, ſo when you are at full leiſure, I ſhould be glad to know the particular reaſons which force you to differ from me on the ſubject of *Cicero's* opinions, to which alone our difference in the preſent caſe is to be referred, that as far as is poſſible we may come ſtill nearer to each other.

We have been alarmed in the Univerſity for ſome days paſt by an oppoſition declared againſt Mr. *Finch*, but it is now dropped, and we ſhall chuſe our old member again to-morrow.

As ſoon as I can ſit down again to my books, I ſhall prepare a new edition of my letter from *Rome*, in 8vo, enlarged with a prefatory anſwer to a Popiſh writer, who has animadverted upon it; where I ſhall take occaſion to explain my ſentiments more explicitely with regard to my belief of the Scriptures, in a manner proper to ſatisfy all reaſonable and candid readers; and for the reſt, it would be a weakneſs in me to expect or deſire that I ſhould ever ſatisfy them. I ſhall depend on your paying us a viſit, either as you go or return from *London*, for I have many things to talk over with you, which I cannot commit to letter. I deſire you to make my compliments to Dr. *Tailor*, with my thanks for all his favours, and to aſſure you that I am with the greateſt truth,

Dear Sir,

Your ſincere friend

and faithful ſervant,

C. M.

LETTER XII.

Camb. Oct. 22, 1741.

Dear Sir,

YOUR obliging letter found me at *Hilderſham*, where I ſpent the autumn with my family, and where the amuſements of the country, and the neceſſity of reforming a rude farm into a tolerable habitation, engroſſed my time and thoughts ſo entirely, as to leave me neither leiſure nor inclination indeed to take a pen in hand, for any other purpoſe but to draw plans and ſettle accounts with my workmen. I returned to *Cambridge* on *Saturday* laſt, and have taken my ſeat again in my ſtudy, where it ſhall be my firſt taſk to pay my debts to all my friends, for their favours not yet acknowledged; and eſpecially to yourſelf, whoſe letter, I aſſure you, gave me a particular pleaſure, as it furniſhed a freſh proof not onely of your candor and good temper, but of your friendſhip alſo to me; and whenever you may find occaſion, as you intimate, to publiſh any obſervations upon my Poſtſcript, I make no doubt, but that you will give the public the ſame reaſon to applaud your moderation, and ſet them ſuch a pattern, of what we call polemical writing, as ought to be copied by all men of liberal education. But whenever you think fit to give yourſelf that trouble, you will remember, that the point which you aſſert, and the ſingle point conteſted in the Poſtſcript, is, that the Papiſts, or the introducers of thoſe rites, which we call Popiſh, had no view or reference to Paganiſm in the introduction of them, and that in fact there were none of them introduced, while there were any Pagan prejudices ſubſiſting among Chriſtians. If you make out this point, (and nothing leſs can be thought to juſtify what you declare in the paragraph referred to by me) you will have the credit of diſcovering a truth, unknown, I believe, before, to the learned world. I am far from imagining, that you had the leaſt intention of diſcrediting any argument againſt Popery, which you took to be a good one, and I may perhaps have ſaid too much, in charging your opinion with overthrowing *the uſe* of my book; but it muſt needs hurt *the credit* at leaſt of a work, that has been well received, to inform the public, that it is grounded at laſt on a miſtake; and though it may happen to wound the Papiſts, that it hits them, as it were, onely by chance. You take notice, that what you have ſaid on the queſtion in difference between us, was eſſential to your argument; but I can aſſure you, that it was the general opinion of all my acquaintance, who reflected upon it, that you had ſtept out of your way, to give a blow to the aſſertors of the Paganiſm of *Rome*, and for that very reaſon were not ſo clear and connected in the concluſion of that ſection, as in the reſt of your ingenious work. I am much pleaſed, that any part of my late performance can deſerve your approbation, and eſpecially thoſe pages which you mention. I was ever ready to have given the ſame ſatisfaction, when it ſhould fall naturally in my way, and belonged to my ſubject, as I told you, I remember, when you were ſo kind as to adviſe me to it, but I could not ſubmit to do it, on the demand of a *V——n* or a *W——r*, which would have expoſed me onely to freſh cenſure, and a more reaſonable ſuſpicion of me. I am glad to hear, that any occaſion will call you to town this winter; you call it indeed a ridiculous one, but if I gueſs at it aright, it may one day produce ſomething ſerious to your advantage. For as times now go, *Horace's* rule of comic wit, may not improperly be applied to our conduct in civil life, and the ridiculous part do your buſineſs more effectually, than all the merit of your graver character: *Ridiculum acri fortius ac melius*, &c. I received lately a very friendly letter from Dr. *Tailor*, for which I deſire you to pay him my thanks and compliments till I find leiſure, which I want at preſent, to acknowledge it myſelf. Mr. *Tunſtall* carried his election yeſterday more clearly than was imagined, by a majority of 23, his number of votes being 160. I beg your acceptance of our joint wiſhes of health and happineſs to you, and am, with true reſpect,

Dear Sir,

Your affect. friend,

and ſervant,

C. M.

Three Letters of Dr. MIDDLETON to another of his Friends.

LETTER I.

Camb. Nov. 19, 1747.

Dear Sir,

I Have been ſo particularly engaged ever ſince I was favoured with yours of the 5th inſtant, that I have not found leiſure till now to thank you, as I ſhould otherwiſe have done much ſooner, for your clear and diſtinct account of Dr. *D——n's* book, which was very agreeable to me, as it is an actual exemplification

tion of the argument of the *Introductory Diſcourſe.*

I have formerly been acquainted with ſeveral Nonjurors of diſtinguiſhed learning in this Univerſity, whom I always perceived to be fond of the ſame principles, which you have extracted from theſe *Catechiſms*; and to be arrived ſo near to the confines of Popery, as if they were prepared to ſtep into it again, whenever a proper occaſion ſhould intervene; which many of them would defend, as a more eligible ſtep, than an union with any other Proteſtant ſect, as being more remote ſtill from the primitive pattern. Theſe principles I could never digeſt, from the time when I began to think and judge ~~for myſelf; and they gave me the~~ firſt diſguſt to what was then ſanctified by the title of Orthodoxy. Nor has the authority of thoſe ancient fathers, from whom they are derived, altered my opinion of them; nor can any authority indeed ever perſuade me to receive as ſacred and divine, what my ſenſe and reaſon declare to be abſurd and ſuperſtitious. Yet this is the Religion, which primitive antiquity recommends to us. But it is a comfort to obſerve, as well of our Clergy as the Laiety, that they are generally become more eaſy and moderate in their notions of Religion, than they have formerly been, from that more free and natural way of expounding its doctrines, which has obtained of late years, not onely in the eſtabliſhed Church, but in all the prudent and ſenſible part of our

Proteſtant ſects; who all ſeem now to agree in making our common ſenſe and reaſon the genuin teſt and meaſure of our common faith; which is the onely way to preſerve any peace or charity among Chriſtian ſocieties. This good fruit will be improved ſtill, I dare ſay, by the choice of our new Archbiſhop; I may ſay, of the two Archbiſhops, who ſeem both to be of a character quite oppoſite to the laſt; men of an open and candid diſpoſition, and lovers of liberty both religious and civil.

As to the expectations, which you mention, from me, I have promiſed a work indeed to the public, of which I will not diſappoint it; but cannot tell, as yet, in what time I ſhall be able to ſend it abroad. Expectation is an adverſary, againſt which I muſt guard it with the more care; and the argument is important, which will require therefore the greater attention, and the alarm, which it ſeems to have given to many, will oblige me to clear it of all offence, except ſuch, as plain fact and truth may poſſibly give: and let that reach as far as it will, I ſhall have no concern for the conſequences.

In the mean while I ſhould be glad, if you can ſend me any information relating to the ſubject, or any thing, which you may have heard worth notice concerning the ſentiments or apprehenſions of men of ſenſe about it; and when you paſs by *Manby's* ſhop, I deſire, if

D——n's book be ſold in town, that you would order him to ſend it to,

Dear Sir,
Your affectionate
and faithful ſervant,
C. M.

LETTER II.

Camb. Dec. 15, 1748.

Dear Sir,

I Am aſhamed to find myſelf ſo late in acknowledging the favour of your laſt obliging letter, and the litterary notices, which you therein furniſhed for the uſe of my book. But I beg you to be aſſured, that the tardineſs of my thanks did not procede from any diſregard to you, for whom I have long conceived a very juſt eſteem; nor yet from any ſlight opinion of the authorities which you had collected; but from my own indolence and diſinclination to writing letters, contracted by the interruption which it gives to my few hours of ſtudy, and the difficulty which it creates to my weak eyes, which will not ſuffer me to write or read what is neceſſary to the taſk, to which I have devoted the remainder of my days, of informing myſelf, as well as I am able, of any thing that is right and good, and of communicating that information to the public, as being the ſole way, which my condition of life has opened to me, of doing any good in the world, or making a proper uſe of theſe ſlender talents, with which Providence has entruſted me.

As to your authorities, though I made no uſe of them in my work, which was quite finiſhed before they reached me; they may probably be of ſervice hereafter, for the defence and confirmation of my argument againſt the cavils of adverſaries, who will not fail to attack it wherever they can find a weak part; as I am not ſo vain as to think, that any performance of mine can be clear of ſeveral parts of that ſort. I ſhould be very glad to hear your free ſentiments upon it, as well as what reception it meets with elſewhere; and eſpecially what objections are made by men of ſenſe to my part, where it is thought defective in matter of proof or probability.

The duke of *Newcaſtle* was yeſterday elected our Chancellor, with great chearfulneſs and unanimity. Dr. *Whalley*, our Regius Profeſſor of Divinity, died the night before of an apoplectic caſe, in which he lay convulſed for a day or two. The candidates mentioned for the vacant Profeſſorſhip are, Dr. *Paris*, Maſter of *Sidney* College, Mr. *Green*, Fellow of St. *John's*, and Mr. *Young* of *Trinity*, our public Orator, all of them men of good merit and principles. I am, with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend, and ſervant,

C. M.

LETTER III.

Jan. 16, 1748-9.

Dear Sir,

YOUR letter of the 10th inſtant gave me no ſmall ſatisfaction, by aſſuring me of the general concurrence of the candid and judicious in their favourable opinion of my late work. The approbation of men of that character is all that I deſire, and what the conſciouſneſs indeed of my own conviction gave me ſome reaſon to expect. The caſe is much the ſame in this Univerſity, where, as far as I am informed, my book has ſpread a general perſuaſion of the truth of what I affirm in it; and, what is ſtill leſs to be expected in ſuch a place as this, without giving any ſort of offence by any part of it, which has yet been taken notice of; tho' there are ſome cautious people always among us, who affect a reſerve and ſilence on ſubjects of this kind, till they are inſtructed from abroad in what manner they ought to treat them.

Mr. *Jortin*, whom you mention, is a very worthy, learned, and judicious man; yet had no reaſon, I think, to expect in my work any notice of that miraculous ſtory, concerning the attempt to rebuild *Jeruſalem*: and your anſwer on that occaſion was the very ſame, which I had given myſelf, when my ſentiments were aſked upon the ſame fact.

In drawing up my remarks on that miracle, which *Berriman* defends, I had got a notion of ſome objections made to the reality of that caſe of the *Ipſwich* woman, ſo as to render it of dubious credit; which made me unwilling to venture upon it. But I have ſince been convinced, that the fact was indiſputably atteſted; and that the tranſactions of the Royal Society would have ſupplied an inſtance as ſtrong and direct to my purpoſe, as that which I borrowed from the *French* academy.

The notices which you communicate, concerning Mr. *Dodwell*, *Joſeph Mede*, &c. may be probably of uſe to me hereafter: and ſince the publication of my book, I have found the character of St. *Jerom* treated with much freedom, by ſome of our orthodox Divines and lovers of antiquity, and among them by Dr. *Cave* himſelf. I had prepared a note or two likewiſe for my *Introductory Diſcourſe*, which I forgot afterwards to inſert, concerning the opinions of ſome of Queen *Elizabeth's* Divines, which I collected from *Strype*, who tells us in his *Annals*, that one *James Calfhill* (*), a man much eſteemed for his knowledge of the primitive fathers,

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(*) He was firſt ſtudent, and afterwards canon of *Chriſt* Church, *Oxford*, dean of *Barking* in *Eſſex*, and archdeacon of *Colcheſter*, and nominated by queen *Elizabeth* to the biſhopric of *Worceſter*, but died before his conſecration, in *Auguſt* 1570. The paſſage referred to in Dr. *Middleton's* Letter, is in p. 23, of his Anſwer to *John Martial's Treatiſe of the Croſs*; which Anſwer was printed at *London* in 1565, in 4to.

declared, that he had read them all, and ſtrictly examined their words and aſſertions, from the very firſt Doctors of the Church after the apoſtolic times, and had found *Imperfections in them all*; which, for the reaſon given by Mr. *Dodwell*, he was unwilling to expoſe.

Manby has ſent me down four ſmall pamphlets, propoſed to come out weekly, called *The Mitre and Crown*, &c. in which I find myſelf and my work abuſed with great rage and virulence of language, but without any argument that touched the point in queſtion. I ſhould gueſs the writer to be ſome nonjuring Divine, who writes partly for bread, and partly for the orthodox cauſe of that ancient and hereditary right, which would give us both our Kings and Biſhops from *Rome*.

I paid your compliments to Mr. *Green*, who will be choſen our Divinity Profeſſor this week, without any competition, after a probationary lecture, which he is appointed to read on certain texts of Scripture in the public ſchools, on *Thurſday* next. He is a very ingenious man, of good temper and principles, and will fill the chair, I dare ſay, with credit. The new Maſter alſo of *Peter-houſe*, Dr. *Keen*, is a very ſenſible and agreeable man, and likely to make an uſeful head, both to the College and the Univerſity. By Dr. *Heberden's* removal from us, I have received a great and particular loſs, which I ſhall ever feel, though the ſenſe of it will be much abated, to hear of its being attended with all the ſucceſs on his part that I wiſh. One advantage he is ſure to meet with, and for which alone I ſhall envy him; I mean that choice of good company with which *London* always abounds.

Pray make my compliments to all friends, and believe me, with great truth,

Dear Sir,
Your faithful
and obedient ſervant,
C. M.

TO MR. VENN.

Camb. Feb. 23, 1734-5.

S I R,

I Have been well informed, that ſome time ago, you took the liberty to call me by name an *Apoſtate Prieſt*. I find the ſame calumny more publickly repeated in the *Miſcellany* of *Feb.* 15, on a certain perſon, not named, whoſe writings have had the misfortune to diſpleaſe you; and as you are ſaid to be concerned in the furniſhing out this weekly paper, in partnerſhip with another worthy Divine, ſo I cannot avoid conſidering myſelf as the object of your abuſe in both caſes.

The onely thing that puzzles me, is to diſcover by what principle of Chriſtianity you think yourſelf juſtified in ſuch a licenſe of calumniating; or how can you imagine a behaviour ſo ſhocking to good nature, good ſenſe, and good manners, to be the effect of any good Religion.

There muſt needs be ſome ſtrange miſtake between us on one ſide or the other. The word *Religion* perhaps may have ſomething in it equivocal, and denote a quite different thing with you and with me. If your Religion preſcribes, permits, or does not condemn, all ſuch defamation as impious and deteſtable, you clear me at once of Apoſtaſy; for that Religion was never mine: and I cannot be charged with deſerting what I had never profeſſed.

Be ſo good, Sir, as to favour me with ſome account of this matter. I have a right, I think, to require at leaſt this ſatisfaction. You are the onely man who has ventured to call me an Apoſtate; and if you are an honeſt man, you would not be particular in your accuſation, without a particular aſſurance of the truth of it; nor ſo forward with your charge, without being as ready with your proofs. Tell me, then, in God's name, nay, tell the public all that you know of me: ſpeak out freely; charge every thing, that either your own malice ſuggeſts, or that of others has ſupplied you with. If you can convict me of any thing immoral or irreligious, of any apoſtaſy from what is laudable

able or virtuous, I will take ſhame to myſelf and own it; if not, ſhall ſeek no other revenge than that of leaving you to the reproach of your conſcience, and the ſcorn of all good men.

I could wiſh likewiſe to be informed, of what uſe it can be to the intereſt of Chriſtianity, of what advantage to Religion, to proclaim to the world that I am an Apoſtate. Should your *Miſcellany* fall into the hands of men wavering in the faith, ſtaggering at every ſcruple, ſhaken by every breath of ſcandal, and there muſt be many ſuch in this ſceptical age, might it not be of weight enough, in the equilibrium of their doubts, to turn the ſcale on the Infidel ſide, to be aſſured by you, that a Clergyman, trained in the boſom of the Church, of ſome reputation and many friends, after a life ſpent in temperance, ſtudy, and the ſearch of truth, had by choice and judgement deſerted it? It is the conſtant policy of all ſects, to challenge to their party any man of merit, ſuppoſed even on the ſlighteſt grounds to have diſcovered ſome inclination to them; but your abſurd zeal would forcibly drive from the ſervice of Religion, men of virtue and learning, againſt their will, againſt their profeſſion, againſt truth.

The perſon whom you treat ſo infamouſly, *convinced*, you ſay, *either of his wickedneſs or imprudence*, has deſiſted from troubling us further with his profaneneſs. You allow it then to be a queſtion, whether it was wickedneſs or imprudence that excited him to write; you allow, that whichſoever it was, he is now convinced, and has deſiſted. This, one would think, might have induced you to ſuffer a man to be quiet, who ſuffers every body elſe to be ſo: he repents, it ſeems; has changed his conduct, troubles nobody; yet all this paſſes for nothing with you; your charity gives no quarter: his repentance muſt be overlooked, his apoſtaſy always remembered, and his very conviction made a matter of freſh reproach to him. This is the true ſpirit of *Rome*, that never ſpares a penitent, who returns from deſertion. For whilſt you take ſuch pains to murder a reputation, ſeeking, according to you, to heal itſelf by conviction and amendment, you declare what you would do with perſons, were they as much in your power.

But though he has deſiſted from troubling us himſelf, yet other enemies, you ſay, *have refitted their armour at his forge: and the witty* Socinian *and crafty* Jeſuit *make great advantage of his writings.* And here again, I muſt beg you to tell me, where it is, that theſe adverſaries are found tampering with his works; where it is, that we may catch them quoting or building their errors upon his principles. If you cannot ſhew this, we muſt take the inſinuation for another fiction of your malice, as ſenſeleſs as it is ſpiteful; a bolt ſhot out at random, which by falling ſomewhere luckily may chance to do miſchief. Is the growth of Popery to be charged at laſt upon me, who have taken more pains, and perhaps with more ſucceſs, to expoſe its frauds and corruptions, than moſt Clergymen now living? Ridiculous calumny! No, Sir, the *Jeſuits*, I can anſwer for it, will readily join forces with you; will ſecond your pious endeavours of wounding my reputation, ruining my credit, and defaming me every where, as a malicious, profane Apoſtate. It is here, after all, that I am touching the bottom of the ſore: it was my piece againſt Popery that gave the firſt ſcandal, and the firſt bad impreſſion of me. As ſoon as it was publiſhed, that learned Divine, your partner, happening to meet me in the ſtreet, told me, with a formal face and air of importance, that he had been in company with certain friends, who declared themſelves offended at it. I aſked him, whether they had found any thing falſe in it? And perceiving that there was no objection of that ſort, left him with no other reflection, than that of a juſt contempt for the impertinence of the information. I heard afterwards of another ************.

Theſe were the men, who firſt began the clamour, and raiſed the firſt envy upon me; and I am now but paying the arrears of that old grudge, as you ſeem to intimate in this very *Miſcellany*: for you ſay, that it was natural for me to hate, what I had before betrayed: as if there was a guilt upon me, previous to that I have been lately charged with, and the æra of my Apoſtaſy was to bear the ſame date with my *Letter* from *Rome*. The more I reflect on your raſhneſs, the more I am inclined to impute it to ſome ſelfiſh motive of intereſt; ſome hopes of gain or glory to accrue from it. It is common with the writers of your claſs, to run the riſk of a pillory, to raiſe the fame and value of their weekly productions; and we read of an hero in antiquity, who ſet the temple of his country on fire, to perpetuate his name to poſterity. In this view, you act conſiſtently, tho' in all views wickedly. But to talk of reforming morals, and recommending Religion, by a method deſtructive of all morality, and contrary to all Religion, is a mere banter and affront to reaſon and common ſenſe. But whilſt you diſpenſe ſo freely the titles of profane and apoſtate, let me recommend to you to conſider the hiſtory of that firſt and chief Apoſtate, the pattern, as well as author, of every other apoſtaſy in the world. You will find his abominable qualities ſummed up in this ſhort character, *The accuſer of the brethren*, Rev. xii. 10. you will find him deſcribed, as defaming *day* and *night*; continually going about roaring, and ſeeking to devour. This, ſays St. *John*, *is the old Dragon, which is the Devil and Satan*, Rev. xx. 2. And what, Sir, is the Devil, that is, Satan, but names drawn from his very eſſence, ſignifying the adverſary, the hater, the accuſer of mankind? His followers, like their maſter, are deſcribed by *David*, under the perſon of *Doeg*, *the malicious accuſer of the Prieſts: with tongues that deviſe miſchief; that love de-*

vouring words, Pſal. lii. 2, 4. *and as men ſet on fire, whoſe teeth are ſpears and arrows, and their tongues a ſharp ſword*, Pſal. lvii. 4. This is the grand, the ſovereign Apoſtaſy; the defection from all Religion; a delight in defaming, an alacrity in accuſing; and I leave it to you to determine, where the reproach of it is the moſt likely to fall, on yourſelf or on me. You have called me an *Apoſtate*; all people, I dare ſay, or all at leaſt who know me, will be ſhocked at it: but ſhould I chance to deſcribe a certain Prieſt by the title of the *Accuſer*, there is ſcarce a man in *England* who would not immediately think on Mr. VENN. A reflection ſufficient, methinks, to admoniſh you, that, inſtead of being ſo buſy with other men's characters, it behoves you much more to turn your thoughts and attention to your own.

But if it be poſſible, after all, that I ſhould ever have it in my power to ſay of you, what you declare of me, that through a conviction of your wickedneſs, you had changed your conduct, and deſiſted from calumniating; I ſhould ſtill act on this, as I ſhall do on every occaſion, juſt contrary to the example you ſet me; I ſhould rejoice in the change, begin to entertain hopes and a better opinion of you, and forget the accuſer to applaud the convert.

CONYERS MIDDLETON.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.